# THE PROMISED SEED.

OR,

## The History of the Incarnation, Birth, and first yeers-Life, of our most blessed Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST.

In way of an Heroicall Poem.

By PH. FITZ-HARRY, Gent

Isa. 7. 14.

*Behold a Virgin shall conceive, and shall bear a Son, and shall call his Name IMMANUEL.*

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# TO THE MOST EXCELLENT PRINCE, *JAMES*, DUKE OF YORK,

## Second Son to His MAJESTY,

and Knight of the most noble Order of the Garter.

THE Author of this ingenious Poem not finding it convenient in this conjuncture of time, to wait upon Your Highnesse in Person, makes bold to do it by his Proxie. By me he humbly doth present to Your Highnesse hands this following *Essay*; not doubting but it may prove acceptable to You for the seasoning of Your tender yeers, with chast and vertuous delights; and that the Argument he writes of will indeer the work,

which can expect ſo little reputation from the Author. He hopes Your Highneſſe will forgive this preſumption in him. And tis my hope that having had the happineſſe of acceſſe to Your Highneſſe formerly, Your Highneſſe may more eaſily be induced to pardon me for this bold attempt, in venturing thus into Your preſence on another mans errand. Which yet I ſhould not have preſumed on, but that I conceive my ſelf obliged to cheriſh all occaſions which are offered to me for doing my ſervice to Your Highneſſe; whoſe gracious pardon and acceptance is all the aime of

*Your Highneſſe moſt*

*humbly devoted,*

HENRY SEILE.

# A PREFACE TO the Christian and ingenious READER.

IT *is written in the Book of God, that the* Beast *which* touched *the* Mountain (*whereon the Law of God was given*) *should surely* dye. *In which, as in a figure, we may clearly see, that none of unclean hearts and unsanctified hands, are to meddle with Gods Book, and the sacred matters therein contained, for fear the like or a worse mischief fall upon him. Of this one* Theopontus *found good proof in the ancient times.* (*as* Aristeas *tels the story*) *who interpreting some Divine Sentences of holy Writ into a profane History by him composed, was presently bereft of his wits and understanding. And so it fared also with one* Theodoretus, *who bringing some Stories of the Old Testament upon the Stage or publick Theatre, contrived into the form and language of a* Tragedie, *was struck blinde immediately; and not restored unto his sight, till he first saw his Errour, and repented of it. So carefull was the Lord in those elder times to preserve the Majestie and reputation of his holy Word from being dishonoured, and made cheap, by those bold undertakings of vile sinfull men. But those indeed were* Heathens, *such as knew not God,*

or saw no more of him then thorow the false lights of depraved Nature, or the dull spectacles of Philosophie, or Science falsly so called: and would have made Gods Word subservient unto their own vain-glory; or else have brought it in contempt, by ranking it with other vulgar and profane Narrations. Though God gave leave unto the Children of the house of Israel to rob the Ægyptians of their jewels; and S. Paul thought it no disparagement to the holy Ghost, to intermix some sentences of Epimenides, Menander, and Aratus, (Grecian Poets all) into the body of his holy and divine Discourses: yet was it never counted lawfull for those of the Ægyptian or old Heathenish race, to lay polluted hands on the Book of God, or profane any of the dictates in the same contained. Such Beasts if they once touched this Mountain, were to dye the death; or otherwise subjected to such grievous punishments, as were not much inferior unto death it self, and in some sorts worse.

Far otherwise it happened with those pious Souls, who came with fear and reverence to those undertakings which were so fatall to the others: to such who made their Arts and Sciences, their knowledge in the tongues, and all outward helps, subservient to the Word and will of God; and used them onely as fit means to imprint the same the better in the minds of men. Of this kinde was the Tragedie called Christus Patiens, composed by Gregor. Nazianzen in his younger dayes; containing the whole storie of our Saviours Passion in form of a Deamptick Poem. Of this, the Cento made out of Homers Works, ascribed generally to Endoxia, wife of the Emperour Theodosius Junior: but since asserted to Pelagius Patricius, who flourished

*riſhed in the times of the Emperour* Zeno: *comprehending the full perfect Hiſtory of our Saviours life. And finally of this ſort alſo, were the Poems of* Juvencus *a Prieſt of* Spaine, Sedulius *an ancient* Scot, Arator *a Subdeacon of the Church of* Rome, *who lived and flouriſhed in the primitive and pureſt times of Chriſtianitie: not to ſay any thing of the verſion of the Pſalter or Pſalms of* David *into* Greek *verſe by* Apollinaris, *the Paraphraſe of St.* Johns *Goſpel made by* Nomus, *and many others of this kinde, which are preferred in print to all poſterity, and not long ſince collected into one of the Volumes of the* Bibliotheca Patrum Veterum. *Theſe men not onely proſpered in the work which they took in hand, but had Gods bleſſing with them generally in the whole courſe of their lives. So great the difference was in the minde and meaning wherewith they took Gods Book in hand; and fitted it to the contentment and capacitie of the Chriſtian Readers; from that, for which theſe* Heathen *Writers which before we ſpake of, were ſo ſorely puniſhed.*

*With like ſucceſſe have others laboured in this kinde, in theſe later Ages. The* Seigneur du Bartas *amongſt the* French, Geo. Buchanan *amongſt the* Scots, *and one of our own Countreymen of name and credit, have left as many evident and fair examples, how compatible Poetry may be with ſacred Storie. Whoſe Muſe more fluent and divine then that of* Geo. Sandys *in his Paraphraſe of* Davids *Pſalms? more eaſie and familiar then that of* Quarles? *more ſtately and ſublime then* Phinees Eletiticus? *What work more excellently digeſted then* Alexander Roſſes *Cento out of* Virgils *Works; in which as one*

Auſonius *made him looſe and wanton, he hath made that* Heroick *Poet wholly* Evangelicall. *And though in reference and compariſon to thoſe before, I hold my ſelf of no eſteem and reputation; yet I have reaſon to beleeve, and ſome ground to hope, that my performance in this ſacred Argument, may not be onely pleaſing unto thoſe who read it, but alſo acceptable in the eyes of the* Lord *my* God, *who knoweth with how much fear and reverence I firſt went about it. I know how heavie a puniſhment was inflicted on the ancient* Bethſhemites, *for looking onely with profane and irreverent eyes into the ſacred* Ark *of the* God *of* Iſrael; *which was a type onely, and a ſhadow of that reall Majeſtie, of that moſt infinite light of Glory, which was incarnate in the* Ark *of the* Virgins *Wombe. And therefore it concerned me not to be too bold in matters of ſo high and divine a nature, (greater then which was never manifeſted to the ſons of men:) nor to approach ſo neer the myſteries of my Saviours birth, or look into the dreadfull counſels of the Lord Almighty; but with all fitting and religious preparation, which the greatneſſe of the work and Argument required of me.*

*The truth is, that amongſt theſe tumults and diſtempers of war, wherin I have been onely of the ſuffering party, I ſought that ſafety to the privacie of a ſweeter ſtreat which I experimentally had found could not be got in fenced Cities, or places of more publick and known reſort. And in the middle of theſe tumults, took ſome intermiſſions to eaſe my minde by ſuch diverſions as either the inclination of my naturall Genious or Bias of my former Studies did diſpoſe me to. And at the laſt, I know not by the motion of what*

what good spirit, but sure I trust upon the motion of the blessed Spirit, who as he breatheth where he listeth, so can he quicken where he pleaseth; I fell upon this present Argument, in prosecution of the which, I hope I have done no dishonour to the holy Gospel, nor to the blessed subject whereof I write. I know it is somewhat of the latest in this declining time of my life and studies, to look for any praise or applause from men, in a performance of this kind in the way of Poetrie; wherein I could never boast my self to have been fortunate in the most flourishing dayes of my wits and fancies. But God who hath ordained praise (as the Psalmist tels us) out of the mouthes of Babes and sucklings; may possibly ordain some out of my mouth also. And I may say, I hope with a Christian confidence, that my Heart hath been auditing of a good matte; though I dare not arrogate nor apply the following words, That my tongue hath been as the pen of a readie Writer. Certain I am, I have endeavoured nothing more then to set forth Gods glory, in sending his onely Son into the world, for the redemption of us men; and to that end, hath filled every Canto with a proper Prayer; that God may have the glory of his own great Acts, and man receive the benefit intended by them.

In the pursuance of this work, I have not added any thing to the sacred Story, which is materiall and of substance, but two passages onely: That of the Ox and the Asse, which you find mentioned in the fifth Song, and seems to have some ground in Isa. 1. not onely hath the countenance of old tradition, but the authority of Prudentius a Christian Poet, and one that flourished in the best times of the Church. That

*of the falling of the Idols of* Ægypt *at our Saviours first entrance into that Countrey, which is briefly touched at Song 7. not onely hath some probable ground in* Isa. 19. *but is affirmed expresly by* Eusebius, *in his* 9th *Book,* de Demonstrat. Evangel. *and by St.* Ambrose *in his Coment on the* 119. *Psalm, and many other of the Fathers. In making the stable where our Redeemer was brought into the world to be a Cave under ground in the Suburbs or outparts of* Bethlehem; *I have followed the generall Opinion of the* Eastern *Church, in placing the coming of the* Wise men *or* Magi, *between the* Circumcision *and the* Purification, *the received tradition of the* Western. *In other things I have indeed indulged a little to Poeticall liberty; but yet no further then the nature of the work will bear. One great want is, that living as I do remote both from books and men, could not help my self, or enrich my fancies, with such* Poeticall *descriptions, and flowers of* Rhetorick, *as might both have enlarged and adorned the work; but was inforced to fashion it, as thou seest it now, out of the native strength of my brain and memory: which makes it come into the world with such imperfections, as the want of all those helps and ornaments may expose it to. And yet perhaps it may the better sort with the present Argument, which being of so high and divine a nature, doth the lesse stand in need of those outward trappings and imbelishments which to another Poem might be fit and necessary. Such as it is, good Reader, I devote it to thy use and benefit: hoping thou wilt find therein both delight and profit. Either of which if thou receive, give God the glory; and let the poore Author have thy prayers. And so fare thee well.*

The

# The Argument of the ſeverall CANTO's.

## CANTO I.

*The Author doth his* Project *tell,*
*And of the time when it befell.*
*Of* Maries *Birth, and Form he ſpeaks,*
*A meaſure of her minde he takes.*
Joſeph *deſcribed; the* Match *agreed;*
*Conjectures why it might not ſpeed.*

## CANTO II.

*The* Lord *to* Gabriel *doth commend*
*The Meſſage which he was to ſend.*
*The* Angel *goes to* Joſephs *houſe,*
*And there ſalutes the Virgin-Spouſe.*
*The word the* Virgin *doth beleeve;*
*And ſo her* Saviour *did conceive.*

## CANTO III.

*The* Virgin *goes from* Nazareth,
*To viſit her* Elizabeth,
*She hears of* Zacharies *ſtrange fate;*
*And ſings her own* Magnificate.
*Three moneths there ſpent, ſhe goes again,*
*From the Hill-Countreys to the Plain.*

CANTO

## CANTO IIII.

*Poore* Joſeph *in a great diſmay,*
*Reſolves to put his wife away:*
*The truth being by an* Angel *ſhewn,*
*He keeps her with him as his own.*
*A* Levite *tels the birth of* John,
*And how old* Zachary *finds his tongue.*

## CANTO V.

CHRIST *born; the heavenly* Angels *ſing*
*A* Chriſtmaſſe Carol *to their King.*
*The Shepherds do to* Bethlem *go,*
*And there they* Caroll *it alſo.*
*They blaze the News; the Babe ſo fam'd*
*Is* circumcis'd, *and* JESUS *nam'd.*

## CANTO VI.

*A* Star *appearing in the Eaſt,*
*Conducts the* Wiſe-men *to the Weſt,*
*They* Herod *ſee; with his conſent*
*Adore the Babe, their gifts preſent.*
*The Virgin-Mother* purified,
Simeon *and* Anna *prophecied.*

## CANTO VII.

*Old* Belzebub *doth* Herod *tempt*
*To make away the* Innocent.
Joſeph *forewarn'd by God, exil'd*
*Himſelf to* Ægypt *with the Childe.*
*Th'* Innocents *ſlaughter'd;* Herods *death,*
*They all return to* Nazareth.

THE

# THE PROMISED SEED:

## OR,

# The History of the Incarnation, Birth, and first yeers Life of our Blessed Lord and Saviour *JESUS CHRIST.*

## CANTO I.

*The Author doth his Project tell,*
*And of the time when it befell.*
*Of* Maries *birth, and form he speaks;*
*A measure of her mind he takes.*
Joseph *describ'd; the Match agreed:*
*Conjectures why it might not speed.*

HIs *Birth* I sing, who no beginnings had;
His *Infancie*, by whom the worlds were made:
And of his *Cradle* do intend to write,
Who rocks the Heavens, and gave the Stars their light.
Pardon *Eternall Babe* this bold designe,
Worthy an *Angels* quill, too high for mine;

And

And guide my trembling hand, whilſt I reherſe
Thy firſt yeers *Goſpel*, faſhioned into verſe.
Thee I implore to ſanctifie my *Muſe*,
To cleanſe my heart, and fit them for thy uſe.
For tis thy ſtorie, which I here preſent,
Thine as the Author, and the Argument.
It was the time when great *Auguſtus* ſwaied
The *Roman* Empire; when the world obeyed
But one known Monarch; and even *Jewrie* knew
No King but him, or none that was a *Jew*.
The time it was, whereof old *Jacob* ſpake,
Concerning *Judah*, being then to take
His laſt farewell; and let his off-ſpring know
What God above decreed of them below.
*The Seepter was departed.* Mighty *Rome*
Poſſeſſ'd the land, and by her Lordly doome,
Gave them a Prince, to fill the Regall place,
Deriv'd from *Eſau*, not from *Jacobs* race.
Now *Shiloh* was to come, the *Expectation*
Both of Gods people, and th' unhallowed Nation
Who to make one of both, ſo long divided,
Came down from Heaven, & on the earth reſided,
All things concurr'd to this great work; the State
Of Nature altered, as if new-create.
The Lyon and the Lambe lay down to ſleep
In the ſame Fold; ſo did the Wolfe and Sheep.
The fearfull Hare dreading no further harmes,
Took up her lodging in the Greyhounds armes:
And with the Hawk, the Patridge ſo agreed,
They perch'd together, and together feed.

The

The long-afflicted world reſtored to reſt,
Admir'd, but ſcarce beleiv'd it ſelf ſo bleſt. (ſpades;
Swords were to Plough-ſhares turn'd, & Spears to
Helmets to Houſhold uſe, and in the ſhades
Of his own Vine, ſat the contented Swaine,
With his courſe Dame, and all his homely traine.
wars voyce was huſh't, no quiet ſleeps were broken
With fierce *Alarmes*, which terrors might betoken:
And *Cæſar* had ſo well the State compoſed,
That *Janus* Temple was the third time cloſed.
Now *SHILOH* was to come; *The promiſed Seed*
Fore-ſhewn in *Types*, was now to come *indeed*.
For what time fitter, then when wars did ceaſe,
To be the Birth-time of the *Prince of Peace*.

This happy time drew on, when neer the Town,
Cal'd *Sepheran*, a place of great renown
In either *Galile*, for grazing Sheepe, (keep
Some of the neighbouring Swains their flocks did
In great content, deviſing ſeverall waies
How to beguile the time, and ſpend their daies.
Amongſt the reſt were two of cheifeſt name,
Both young, and wealthy, both of untouch't fame:
The one hight *Amos*, a rich *Heardſmans* Son,
Cheerfull of mind, and of complexion;
The other *Jacob* cal'd, a man inclin'd
To ſober thoughts, but now of late his mind
Was grown more troubled then it wont. He fared
Juſt like a man, that either griev'd or cared
Too much for worldly things againſt his nature,
Which was benigne, and of a lively feature.

This

This *Amos* had obſerv'd, and long'd to know
What thing it was that had exil'd him ſo
From his own ſelf, and made him ſeem ſo ſtrange
"To his old friends. Some cares muſt make his
"Or is it *Love*, ſaith he. Be which it will, (change;
"It me concerns to know, and thee to tell.
"Sorrows imparted to a friend wax leſſe,
"And love communicated findes ſucceſſe.
"What ere it was, he pray'd him not to ſpare
"To let him know it, were it love or care.
Ah friend, ſaid he, the Rule too true I find,
Ther's no concealing of a troubled minde.
Yet I not ſay I love, I have no heart
Capable of thoſe flames, of ſuch a dart.
Nor ſhould I ſay I greive. "It is not right
"To greive becauſe another findes delight.
Yet truth to tell, I do lament a loſſe,
Which becauſe publick, few do think a Croſſe.
What Ridles have we here, ſaid *Amos* ſtraight,
Is grief ſententious, and ſo full of weight!
What publick loſſe is that which greives thee thus;
And yet is thought no croſſe at all to us?
Speak thy mind freely man, thou deals not fair,
In a clear day to fancie *Clouds* in th' Aire.
Then *Jacob* bluſhing, knoweſt thou not, ſaid he,
Old *Joachim* and *Anne* his wife. They be
The oldeſt pair in *Sephora*, well known
For Godly life, more for a beauteous one
Their daughter *MARY*. Haſt thou ſeen the Maid?
Seen her I have, ſaid he, but never had

Fit

Fit opportunity to mark her well:
Yet I have heard thee's one that doth excell.
Excell, quoth *Jacob*, that she doth indeed
As much as sweetest Rose the vilest weed.
None of the Sex come neer her. But since thou
Art such a stranger to her face, allow
Me leave to speak her worth, and to prefer
To thy kinde eares her perfect *Caracter*.
And yet when all is done, I must confesse
My ablest skill will make her worth seem lesse.
Know then that she is come o'th Royall line,
A branch of *Jesses* Root, of *Davids* Vine.
But one that more adorns the *Regall* stem,
Then any lustre she receives from them.
Her shape seems more then Mortall; every part
Such, as if Nature did contend with Art.
Her *Cheekes* are like two fruitfull beds oregrown,
With *Ambratick* flowers, but newly blown;
Which do, besides the *Odours*, glad the sight,
And ravish the Spectators with delight.
Her *Eyes* most bright, and sparkling to behold
Like a rich *Diamond* in a Ring of Gold.
And yet from thence there flames so pure a fire,
As doth both raise and rectifie desire.
Her Ivorie *Teeth* in whitenesse do outgo
The down of Swans, or Winters driven Snow.
Her *Lips* are two twin-Cherries, and do cast
Such equall sweetnesse, both on eye and tast;
That of those ravish'd senses do dissent,
In challenging to each the cheif content.

Her *Neck* unbeautified with borrowed grace,
Is whiter then the *Lillies* of her face.
Her milky *Breasts*, which like two Mountains swell,
Then Pearls more Orient, the white cliffes excell:
Whose whole extent is circled round about
With *Azure-Riverets* sporting in and out.
And over all her golden *Curles* unbound,
Hang in neglected order to the ground.
The whole so curious, that no mortall birth
Can shew a beautie, lesse commixt with earth.
So that if all the *Graces* of the Sex
Were joyn'd to compleat one, in all respects;
Or could there out of all extracted be
A perfect *Quintessence*; the same is she.
"Thou tell'st of wonders man, said *Amos* then,
"Can such a Beauty be deriv'd from men?
"Thou dotest sure, or else hast lately read
"Some of the *Heathen* Poets, and thy Head
"Swarmes with their *Godesses*. Said *Jacob*, no.
I speak the truth, yet far too short I know
Of her perfections, as I said before:
For trust me Friend, all this she is, and more.
And yet how short do these perfections seem
How unregarded, of what mean esteem:
How drossie shewes her shape, how un-refin'd
Compar'd unto the *Treasures* of her mind.
Needs must the *Jewels* be to wonder precious,
When as the *Cabinet* is so rich and specious.
A *Soule* she hath of so divine a merit,
As purifie's her very *Flesh* to Spirit.

Makes

Makes her all immateriall and ſublime
The grand example of this Age and Clime,
And leaves a pattern to ſucceeding daies;
Which ſome ſhall imitate, few rightly praiſe.
Mild are her *Looks*, and winning, yet ſevere;
Not Courtly in her *Garb*, nor yet auſtere.
Her *Lips* drop *Wiſdom*. Every word ſo weigh'd
That when ſhe ſpeak's, ſhe ſpea'ks as one afraid,
Leſt any then ſhould paſſe, which may not be
Seaſoned with Grace, and grac'd with modeſty.
Her *Thoughts* ſo void of Earth, and earthly Toyes,
So wholly fixt upon *Celeſtiall* Joyes
That even her mirth, her dreames, her very cares,
Are more in Heaven then other womens praiers.
In all the Tribes of *Iſrael* is there none
When both the *Saints* and *Angels* joyn'd in one,
To make compleate, but ſhe. A *Saint* for grace
She ſeemes to be, an *Angel* in her face.
So pure without, ſo ſanctified within,
There is no room for *Folly*, leſſe for *Sin*.
" Thou haſt deſcrib'd a perfect peece indeed
" Said courteous *Amos*, one who doth exceed
" All that I ever heard. The like again
" No Hiſtorie can ſpeak, nor *Poets* faine.
" And now I find thy greife. Doth *Jacob* love
" This gracefull Dame? She is (ſaid he) above
The height of my deſires. I find no fire
Flames in my breſt, but onely to admire
So rare perfections. For I alwaies look
So much of *Heaven* to be about her Look

As made me think my self too far unfit,
To entertain love, or to offer it.
And yet I not so much my self despise
But that I might have seem'd in her fair Eyes
As lovely as the man to whom her Father
Hath late Espous'd her; and the fitter rather
Our yeers and qualities compar'd. "But Friend
"Said *Amos* then, is she thou doest commend
"Bestow'd and gon! I prethee tell me who
Hath gain'd the Blisse, thou durst not reach unto.
I shall, said *Jacob*, and will truly deal
In my report, without or hate, or zeal,
Without dislike, or envy. Thou shalt finde
I bear a fair tongue in a troubled mind.
In this our Tribe, hard by, there is a Town
Cal'd *Nazareth*, a place of no renown
Till by her blest abode, it gain'd a name,
Who makes all places happy when she came.
There *JOSEPH* dwelt (who doth not *Joseph* know)
As high in birth, as in his fortunes two.
A man descended of the *Royall* Race,
Of comely presence, and a reverend face.
His port proclaimes his high descent, though poor
And by unprosperous fortune made obscure.
Well strook in yeers, a *Carpenter* by trade;
And that's the worst of all that can be said:
(Though Age be honour'd; and in happiest daies
"The gaines of honest Trades is no dispraise:)
Just so the Sun when with a darke mist clouded
Darts through his beams, which under it are shrouded.

So juſt he is with all, he never knew
The waies of wrong, gives every man his due:
Is Maſter of his word, the poor mans friend;
And what he cannot give, will freely lend.
And by theſe honeſt Arts gains more affection,
Then could be calleng'd by his great extraction.
The happieſt man of all his noble houſe
And yet moſt happy in ſo ſweet a *Spouſe*.
For the old Couple knowing well, that he
Is of a moſt unquelſtioned honeſty,
Of their one ſtock, and perhaps wealthier too
Then thou or I, or moſt men elſe do know.
Eſpouſ'd her to him. But the *Conſummation*
According to the Cuſtom of our Nation,
Is for ſome moneths deferr'd. To make all ſure
" (For love well grounded longeſt will indure)
He took her home, there with him to abide,
As a *betrothed wife*, not a *married Bride*.
And this I greive at as a publick Croſſe,
That *Nazareth* grows happy by our loſſe.
Ah Swain, ſaid *Amos* then, thy hopes are gone.
My hopes, ſaid *Jacob*, at the beſt, were none.
I never entertain'd thoſe thoughts; and that
I told thee at the firſt; Haſt thou forgat
My words ſo ſoon. Know Shepherd that my love
If love it were, was more divine, above
All ſenſuall appetite. And if I gueſſ aright
Old *Joſeph* will not find much more delight
In this *Eſpouſall*, then to have it ſaid
He is the Owner of ſo fair a Maid;

Unlesse his chaster flames do shift the place,
And fix upon her *minde*, but not her *face*.
For know, dear friend, that though his Spouse she be,
She's still unbedded. Her Virginitie
She keeps inviolate, as an new-blown Rose,
Before the Virgin leaves it doth unclose.
Reserv'd she seems for a more high designe
Then *Joseph's* bed. So rich, so fair a shrine
Deserves a nobler Saint then he; and one
That must exceed her in perfection.
And though old *Joseph* thinks each houre a yeer,
Esteems the time far off, though drawing neer:
And chides the Sun for making no more haste,
Because his own strong Fancies run too fast:
Yet she not wish to change, or lay aside
Her *Virgin*-state, in hope to be a *Bride*.
Her purer flames flie upward, and above
Her thoughts are fixt on a diviner Love.
To whom her heart she offers dayes and nights
In prayers and vows; with the accustomed *Rites*.
Her self she sacrificeth, Morn and Even.
Never were purer hands lift up to Heaven.
Heaven is her Husband, and I trow no force
Will *Joseph* use, or take a rigid course
To charge her holy thoughts. Few moneths will show
Whether the things I say, be true or no.
But now tis time to part. The Sun gins set
His watrie beams; and night as black as jet
Will overtake us, if we high not fast:
Shepherd farewell. Such haste will make no waste.

And

And ſo they parted without more delay,
Waiting the iſſue of the *Bridall* day.
Which how it fail'd, and what thereupon befell,
My wearied *Muſe* in the next Songs ſhall tell.

## The Prayer.

*ALmighty God, which haſt knit together thy Elect in one communion and fellowſhip, in the myſticall body of thy Son* CHRIST, *our Saviour: Grant us grace ſo to follow thy* holy Saints, *in all vertuous and godly living, that we may come to thoſe unſpeakable joyes which thou haſt prepared for them who unfainedly love thee, through* JESUS CHRIST *our Lord. Amen.*

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## CANTO II.

*The* Lord *to* Gabriel *doth commend*
*The Meſſage which he was to ſend.*
*The* Angel *goes to* Joſephs *houſe,*
*And there ſalutes the Virgin-Spouſe.*
*The word the* Virgin *doth beleeve;*
*And ſo her* Saviour *did conceive.*

THere is a City far above the skies,
Never beheld by any mortall eyes.
A glorious City built of burniſht Gold,
Wall'd round with precious ſtones of pureſt mould.
The Gates of *pearl*, an intire Pearl each Gate;
The ſtreets with *Chryſtall* pav'd, and ſtuds of *Plate*.

Like cleereſt skie bedeck'd with ſtars do ſhow.
And all the *Rivers* do with *Nectar* flow.
Where neither Sun nor Moon do ſhine, yet light
Continuall there, a day without a night.
Needs muſt continuall day be there, where ſhine
*The Light of lights*, the Majeſtie divine.
There ſtands the Palace of the mighty King,
Rais'd on high *Columnes* richly glittering;
Of Gold, and ſparkling *Carbuncles* compact,
For matter gorgeous, and for form exact.
And there the Worlds ſole Monarch doth poſſeſſe
His advanc'd throne in endleſſe Happineſſe;
Attended by Celeſtiall ſpirits, a Quire
Of *Angels*, *Miniſters of flaming Fire*.
Who ſtanding all before his Preſence, be
Equall in grace, though differing in degree;
And in full Conſort with moſt ſweet accord
Chant out the praiſes of their dreadfull Lord.

One of this ſacred train attending there,
He cauſ'd th'Arch-Angel *Gabriel* to come neer;
And guiding down his eye to *Joſephs* houſe,
Shewed him (moſt glad to ſee't) the *Virgin-Spouſe*
At her devotions; with ſo ſweet a grace,
As ſerved to make a *Temple* of the place.
A place it was from all the houſe ſelected,
Not gaudie gay, nor careleſly neglected;
But grave and decent, and from tumult free:
Such as an *Oratorie* ought to be.
There, with the doore firſt cloſed, her ſelf ſhe plac'd
Upon her bended knees: her eyes down-caſt,

As

As if unworthy to behold the skie,
The Palace of ſo great a Majeſtie.
But what her eyes preſum'd not, ſhe commended
Unto her faithfull hands. Both which extended
To the full length, and both together joyn'd,
Seem'd to convoy the Treaſures of her mind
To Gods eternall Throne. And in this ſort
Made ſhe her ſuits unto the Heavenly Court.
Before her eyes a gilded book there lay
In which ſhe read, and prayed. No night nor day
Eſcap'd, in which ſhe did not learn ſome part,
Till ſhe at laſt had conn'd it all by heart.
'Twas *DAVIDS Pſalms*, a Book not meanly prized
By ſuch as are devoutly exerciſed.
And on this book ſpent ſhe much time and coſt,
Much for the *Author*, for the *matter* moſt.
Her *daily Office* ſhe from thence did gather,
As her choice wit directed; and the rather
Becauſe that with his blood ſhe did inherit
So great a portion of King *DAVIDS Spirit*.
This ſeen, and *Gabriel* at a maze to finde
So much of Heaven, in one of mortall kinde;.
The Lord proceeded thus. "The time is come
"Predeſtinate by my eternall doom
"For the MESSIAHS birth. The *Promiſed Seed*
"Muſt now be born, and chiefly born to bleed.
"His *Blood* it is which onely can reſtore
"*Collapſed man*, to what he was before
"His wretched Fall; and chalk him out a way
"To thoſe full *Glories* which you here enjoy.

"A work too great for any to perform
"Of humane race, of mortall Parents born.
"Therefore my *Son*, my *onely Son* must do it,
"Who was before all Worlds appointed to it.
"But since that *Man* hath sinn'd, and *Man* must die
"(How should he else my Justice satisfie?)
"This *Son* of mine must take *mans Flesh*, and come
"Like mortall mankind, from some *Mothers wombe*.
"This and this only is the way laid down, (known.
"To save lost Man; though not till now made
"He paus'd, then added; *Gabriel* doest thou see
"Yonn devout *Hebrew Virgin*! This is she,
"Whom I have chose from all her Sex, to make
"The Instrument of this great work; and take
"*Celestiall Seed* into her Womb, and bring
"Into the World her *Saviour* and her *King*:
"Go *Gabriel* to yonn Village of the *Jews*,
"Be thou the Messenger of this *glad News*;
"And let her know what honours are design'd,
"That Rarest dwelling of a purer Mind.
"Be thou the first *Evangelist*, and unfold
"In brief, what shall more largely be inroll'd.

At his Creators feet with Reverence due
The *Angel* bowed, and swift as lightning flew
On the commanded Message; highly joyed
To be, on such a gratefull work, employed.
The massie body of the *Spheres* being past,
(As what could hinder an *Arch-Angels* haste)
He spread his golden Feathers all abroad,
And on the *wings of the swift Windes he rode*.

Flie

Flie *Gabriel*, flie; ſurprize her unawares,
Even in the midſt of her devouteſt prayers.
Flie *Gabriel*, flie; ſlack neither pace nor pains:
" An unexpected good moſt welcome gains.
And ſo he did. And entring *Joſephs* houſe,
He pierc'd the unlockt doores: the *Virgin-Spouſe*
Being ſo bent on ſacred Meditation,
That ſhe perceiv'd not what ſtrange alteration
The *Angels* preſence made: As if her minde
Were gone to Heaven, her Body left behinde.
Whom when the *Angel* ſaw ſo ſtrongly fixt
On Prayer, or Contemplation on the Text;
And heard the *Raptures* of her Soul, and heeded
That gracious fountain whence thoſe ſtreams pro-
He ſtood admiring, and aſtoniſht at (ceeded:
So rare perfections, had almoſt forgat
To do the Errand, which with ſuch glad haſte
He came about. At which ſurpriſe abaſh't,
He ſhook his glorious Feathers; with which noiſe,
She found her raviſht ſenſes, He his Voice.
And thus he ſpake. " Hail *Maid* & *Wife*, ſaid he,
" The *pureſt* of thy ſex, and like to be
" The *happieſt* alſo, if with Faith thou bear
" In thy dear Breſt, the Meſſage thou ſhalt hear.
" Hail *MARY full of Grace, Hail freely loved*;
" By Man applauded, and by God approved.
" Hail thou which art by Heav'n ſo highly prized
" As if, yet living, thou wert Eternized.
" How fully doth thy God to thee impart
" His Divine preſence! In ſuch grace thou art

With

"With thy dread Lord, that he is ſtill about thee,
"His *Spirit* within, his mighty *Power* without thee.
*Moſt bleſſed among women.* EVES offence
Hath layed a Curſe, but thy *Obedience*
Shewers Bleſſings on thy Sex; and gives thy name
The brighteſt *Rubrick* in the Book of Fame.
*Moſt bleſſed woman* Hail, ordain'd to breed
In thy chaſt Virgin-womb the *Promiſed Seed.*
Whiles thus he ſpake, the *Virgin* grew amazed
Trembled in every joynt, and trembling gazed
Diſtractedly about; and did not know
Whether the things ſhe ſaw were true or no.
But when he had call'd back her wandring ſenſe,
She quickly freed her ſelf from that ſuſpence:
Judging aright by that which ſhe did hear
Both of the *Meſſage*, and the *Meſſenger.*
But having baniſht that, ſhe ſtrait did finde
Another paſſion riſing in her minde:
The words and matter of the *Salutation*,
Turning amazement into admiration.
And thus ſhe ſoftly ſaid; "Ah what am I
"Poore ſimple Maid, that *Angels* from on high
"Should come to *viſit* me, and come to bring
"Such words of comfort from my heavenly King.
"Ah bleſſed God what ſugred words were theſe!
"How doth the dear remembrance of them pleaſe!
"How glorious on a ſudden ſeems this place!
"Can fleſh and blood deſerve ſo great a grace?
And ſaying thus drew back, as ſtill diſmaid.
Which when the *Angel* noted, he thus ſaid.

Fear

"Fear not divineſt Virgin. I am ſent
"Not to bring Terrors to thee, but Content.
"The Favour thou art in with him above,
"Makes thee a *Veſſel* not of *wrath*, but *love*.
"Know thou, and do aſſuredly beleeve (ceive
"Theſe words of mine, thou ſhalt forthwith con-
"A Son, and ſuch a Son, as never Mother
"Conceiv'd the like, or broght forth ſuch another.
"So great in power, ſo mighty in renown,
"That the *Moſt High* ſhall claim him *for his own*;
"For his own Son ſhall loudly him *proclaim*:
"And *JESUS*, *JESUS* ſhalt thou call his Name.
"A *Name above all names*. No Age or Storie
"Affords a name of ſo great grace and glorie.
"At the bare ſound whereof *all knees ſhall bowe*
"*In Heaven, and Earth, and in the Hels belowe*.
"Him ſhall the Lord advance to *Davids* throne
"And in great glory place him thereupon,
"Not for a few yeers, and ſome odd months ſpace,
"(As hapneth unto Kings of mortall Race)
"But for eternity. His reign ſhall be
"As everlaſting as himſelf: and He
"In greater power then ever King before
"Shall reign in *Jacobs* houſe for evermore.
"A Kingdom of a nature more divine,
"Then that before poſſeſſ'd by *Davids* line:
"And ſuch as ſhall from Eaſt to Weſt extend,
"From Pole to Pole. A Kingdom without end.

The joy which ſprang in aged *Sarahs* minde
When even againſt the courſe of Woman-kinde

She

She conceiv'd *Iſaac*; Father *Abrahams* joy,
When for a *Ram* he had repriev'd the *Boy*,
Stretch'd on the *Altar*, and the bloodie knife
Advanc'd on high to ſtrike the vein of life:
Fell ſhort of this which on theſe words did riſe
In *Maries* breſt, and ſparkled in her eyes.
But wiſely caſting what might be a bar
Between ſo great an happineſſe and Her;
She thus objected: "I do nothing doubt
"Thou bleſſed *Miniſter of Heaven*, but out
"Of *Davids* long-neglected Line ſhall ſpring
"The *Jews* MESSIAH, *Iſraels* hop'd-for King.
"Yet give me leave to fear I am not ſhe
"That is deſign'd to this Felicity.
"To be the Mother of that Prince, ſo great,
"That ſhall poſſeſſe my Father *Davids* Seat:
"Who neither yet knew man, nor do deſire
"To feed the flames of any luſtfull Fire; (will,
"And though *betrothed*, would, might I have my
"Preſerve my ſelf a *ſpotleſſe Virgin* ſtill.
She ſigh'd and ſtopt. The *Angel* then replyed,
"The way to this is not to be a *Bride*.
"Enjoy thy wiſh; For ever famous be
"For thy *perpetuall Virginitie*.
"Tis not the loyns of Man, from whence ſhall come
"The *Promiſed Seed*, but from the *Virgins Wombe*.
"And God hath thee ordain'd in his intent
"Of this great work to be the *Inſtrument*.
"Art thou diſmaid, and troubled in thy thought
"To find how this great wonder ſhall be wrought!

Know

" Know that the mighty *Power* of God *moſt high*
" Shall *over-ſhadow* thee, and fructifie
" Thy *Virgin-womb*; out of which bleſt increaſe
" Shall iſſue He which is the *Prince of Peace.*
" The *holy Ghoſt*, the quickning Spirit of Heaven
" *Shall come upon thee*; by whom life is given,
" And animation to all *humane* Seed.
" Tis he that *quickneth* what the *Womb* doth breed.
" Readeſt thou not that in the worlds firſt matter
" The *Spirit of God* did *move upon the water*;
" And thence produc'd the *World*; that in the day
" When God made Man out of wel-moulded clay,
" He *breath'd into his face the Spirit of Life*!
" God was the *Husband* here, the Earth the *Wife.*
" Now what this *Moving*, *Breathing*, was; to thee
" That ſhall this *Coming*, *Over-ſhadowing* be.
" In which regard the Babe which thou ſhalt bear,
" That *Holy thing* ſhall not be call'd the Heir
" Of *Joſeph*, or of *Mary*; but the Son
" Of th'Ever-living God, that Three-in-one.
" *All things are poſſible to God.* He can
" As eaſily create a Son to man
" Out of a *Virgin-ſtock*, as raiſe up Fruit
" From an old, ſapleſſe, barren, rotten Root.
" For proof of which, *Elizabeth* thy Friend,
" Thy Friend and *Couſen*, drawing neer her end,
" Her ſtrength being ſpent, the courſe of Nature
" Six moneths ago *conceived* of a Son. (done,
" And be aſſured, that Bleſſings are in ſtore
" For thee, as great in weight, in number more.

He

He ended, and the *Virgin* thus subjoyn'd,
" *Behold the Handmaid of the Lord.* I find
" My Soul enlightned, and my Will shall be
" In all respects conform to his Decree.
" Too weak am I for to *conceive* the *Word*,
" Too vile to be the *Mother* of my *Lord*:
" But what I want in strength do thou dispense
" Out of thy Treasurie of *Omnipotence*.
" And what I want in goodnesse, Lord, supplie
" Out of thy Well of *Graces*, never drie.
" Tis thou which onely canst this word fulfill.
" *Be it O Lord according to thy will.*
Which gracious words she had no sooner said,
But she conceiv'd, and grew a *Mother Maid*.
The *Holy Ghost came on her*, and she felt
In that *Celestiall* warmth such comforts dealt,
That she *conceived* immortall Seed; and so
Brought forth her Saviour. See what Faith can do,
She took him first into her *heart, beleeved*;
Before she bare him in her *Womb, conceived*.
The work thus finish'd, & the conference ended,
The blessed *Angel* back to Heav'n ascended:
Leaving the *Virgin* full of joy behind,
Who still kept all these sayings in her mind.
With strong desires to see the sweet concent
Between *prediction* and *accomplishment*.
Then falling down upon her bended knee,
And lifting up her eyes; " Great God, saith she,
" How happy am I made, how crown'd with blisse,
" More then my heart could hope, my Soul durst wish!

How

"How high a *Grace* this day is to me shown;
"That thou hast thus *Espoused* me for thine own.
"Perfect thine own great work; and let not man
"Come neer to touch me with polluted hand.
"My loves, O Lord, are fixt on thee alone,
"How happy I, were I belov'd of none.
"But Lord preserve me thine; and keep me free
"Even from mans chastest importunitie.
She rose; And now her minde began to run
Upon *Elizabeths* conceived Son;
Whom she desires to *visit*, and impart
Their mutuall secrets to each others heart;
To compare blessings, and congratulate
The happy change of their exalted state.
And so with *Josephs* full and free consent
Attended by a slender train she went.
The journey short, but yet (though short) too long
To be concluded in this present Song.

## The Prayer.

WE *beseech thee Lord powre thy grace into our hearts, that as we have known* CHRIST *thy Sons* Incarnation *by the Message of the* Angel; *so by his* Crosse *and* Passion *we may be brought unto the glory of his* Resurrection, *through the same* CHRIST *our Lord. Amen.*

## CANTO III.

*The* Virgin *goes from* Nazareth,
*To visit her* Elizabeth.
*She hears of* Zacharies *strange fate;*
*And sings her own* Magnificate.
*Three moneths there spent, she goes again*
*From the Hill-Countreys to the Plain.*

WInter was past. And now the Sun began
To crosse the horns of the Celestiall *Ram.*
Shewing his lov'd face to the teeming Earth,
Which on the sight receiv'd new life, new Birth.
Dead Plants reviv'd, the trees shot forth their buds,
Green leaves began to clothe the naked Woods.
And the numm'd Earth moystned with quickning showres,
And cherisht with new warmth produc'd its flowers.
The Vales were spread with *Violets*, and the Hils
Cover'd with *Daysies*, and with *Daffadils.*
And under every Hedge and place of shade,
Were Beds of *Primroses* and *Cowslips* made.
The Birds, those pretty *Chorasters* did sing
In sweetest notes the welcome of the *Spring.*
At whose so lov'd approach the wanton *lambs*
Did frisk and dance for joy before their Damms:
All things so hastning towards their perfection,
That one might say 'twas *Natures Resurrection.*
About this time it was when first the Sun
Had past the *Watrie Constellation;*

And

And entred *Aries* his first House of strength,
Making the dayes and nights of equall length:
That the *Arch-Angel* came to *Josephs* house,
With his glad Message to the *Virgin-Spouse*.
Which as old *Sages* had it by Relation
Was the first day too of the *Worlds Creation*.
And much about this time it was, that she
Who had so late conceiv'd a *Deitie*,
In her chast Womb, continued her intent;
And forwards on her purpos'd journey went.
Small was her train, but her protection great.
The Lord was her defence; from whose high seat
Whole troops of *Angels* were sent down to be
Her *Guardians* from affront and injurie.
Bright were the dayes; the skie so clear and fair,
That not a *Cloud* appear'd to dark the Aire.
Nor stirr'd the *Winde*, but by its Breath to yeeld
To her quick sense the *Odours* of the Feild.
The *Birds* did entertain her with a Song
In every *Thicket* as she past along;
And sometimes followed her with cheerfull notes;
In a full *Consort* of harmonious throats.
With which delights the journey did so please,
That she walkt much, for pleasure or for ease.
And as she walk'd, she carried such a *Grace*,
Such characters of *glory* in her face;
That the mixt Flocks which on those hils do breed,
To see her Beauties did forget to feed:
And the wild Beasts which rang'd about the same,
Laid by their native fierceneſſe, and grew tame.

The Earth grew proud to bear he ,and did meet
With a dumb joy the blessings of her Feet.
For where she trod, she left the place more green
Then the known *Circles* of the *Fayrie Queen*:
Thus, and with some discourse on those occasions,
Mingled with Praiers and sacred Meditations;
She came at last, thus guarded and attended,
To the *Hill Countries* where her journey ended.
In which *Hill Countries* where the Houses stood
Dis joyn'd, as in a Wilde ness or Wood,
There dwelt a man cal'd *Zacharie*, a Priest
Of the *most High*. A man divinely blest
In all those gifts and graces which adorn
That holy *Function*, and preserve from scorn
Of the prophane Rout; the sacred *Coat*
In which small spots scape not severest note.
Blest man he was in all his course of life,
Most blest of all in a most vertuous wife.
One of so equall worth; she seem'd to be
In different clothes and dresse, another He.
Both *blameless in the sight of God and men*,
And both so innocent, that no known sin
Defil'd their secret thoughts; Both serv'd the Lord
In the same way of worship. In a word
Never was known a juster man than He,
Nor wife more pious and devout than She.
An happy Pair, whom no crosse jar did sever;
Both dearly lov'd, flourish'd, grew old together.
And yet there wanted to compleat their Blisse,
"(For the world yeelds no perfect happinesse)

The

The fruit of marriage, Children. God had cloſed
*Elizabeths* dead womb. and 'twas ſuppoſed
She was in *Sarahs* caſe; and well might be
Almoſt in yeers as much paſt hope as ſhe.
But when all hope was hopeleſſe, then ſhe found
"That where man fails, Gods ſtrength doth moſt abound.
Which being firſt by th'*Angels* mouth made known
Shall ſhortly be atteſted by her own.
No ſooner was the bleſſed *Virgin* come
Within the threſholds of the houſe, but ſome
Gave notice to *Elizabeth*; who before
Had liv'd conceal'd for full five moneths, and more.
But now aſſoon as ſhe the News did hear
Of her moſt dear-lov'd *Maries* being there;
She left her ſecret lodgings, to attend
The welcome of ſo near and dear a friend.
Who being met by the immaculate Maid,
She caſt her ſelf into her arms, and ſaid,
"Hail holy *Matron*, whom I joy to greet
"In my beſt words and wiſhes; more to meet
"In ſuch a bleſt condition, as to bear
"In this the Winter of thine Age, an Heir.
"A bleſſed Babe, a Veſſel of Election,
"And ſanctified even in his firſt conception.
Which words ſhe had no ſooner ſpake, but lo
The unborn Babe, th'imperfect *Embryo*,
Leapt in the womb; as if he underſtood
What he was made to be, how great, how good:
Or had a longing to prevent his Birth,
In waiting on his Lord, not yet on earth.

*Elizabeth* ſoon felt it; and ſhe found
Her ſelf withall tranſported, and the bounds
Prefix'd to her accuſtom'd thoughts enlarg'd,
The *Holy GHOST* fell on her. Over-charg'd (brake,
With whole great weight and power, ſhe ſilence
And in a ſacred rapture thus ſhe ſpake.

1.

Moſt bleſſed, holy Maid art thou
Above all other of thy Sex,
In all reſpects.
So is the Fruit moſt bleſſed too
Which thou within thy Womb doeſt bear,
And yeer by yeer
Shall be an holy celebration
Of this great wonder of his *Incarnation.*

2.

Ah Lord how doth it come to paſſe,
That ſuch an honour ſhould be done
So mean a one.
Too vile a wretch am I alas,
That the dread *Mother of my Lord*
Should thus afford
To come and *viſit* one ſo poore,
And ſet her ſacred foot within my doore.

3.

No ſooner did thy *Salutation*
Make way into my greedie ears;
But as't appears,
The Childe I have in expectation,

Took

Took notice of the kinde ſalute,
And though yet mute
It leapt for joy within my Womb
That his dread Lord was in his Mother come.

4.

Moſt bleſt art thou, again ſay I,
In that thou haſt the word *beleeved*,
And ſo *conceived*.
For there is nothing verily
Of all which God hath to thee ſpoke,
That ſhall be broke,
But every thing ſhall be fulfilled
Which He, concerning thee hath ſaid or willed.

And here the Spirit ceaſed, and ſhe ſtood mute,
Till *Mary* rows'd her with a new Salute,
And ſaid, "How bleſt art thou to whom is given
"So great a meaſure of the Spirit of Heaven.
"By which I find that thou acquainted art
"With my affairs. The ſecrets of my Heart
"I purpos'd to have powr'd into thy Breſt,
"And lodge them in that place of truſt and reſt.
"But ſince thou knoweſt as much of my eſtate
"As I my ſelf am able to relate;
"Let me deſire the truth to underſtand
"Of thy condition from thine own dear hand.
"Uncertain Rumors to mine ears have come,
"Of the good *Zacharies* being ſtricken dumb.
"And every idle head is apt to vent
"His own bad ſenſe upon the Accident,

" Which makes me crave of thee the full Relation,
" Both how it hapned, and on what occaſion.
An eaſie ſuit, *Elizabeth* replyed,
A ſmall requeſt, too ſmall to be denyed
So great a Suirer. Let us then retire
To a more private place, and thy deſire
Shall be fulfill'd. So hand in hand they went
With mutuall comfort, and extream content
Unto the ſecret roome, where unrevealed
*Elizabeth* had liv'd ſo long concealed.
Where being on an eaſie day-bed laid,
The aged *Marron* thus began, and ſaid.

I know (bleſt Soul) thou canſt not chuſe but hear
How long thy humbleſt ſervants married were,
Without the fruit of marriage; till at laſt
I grew ſo old, that all our hopes were paſt.
I need not tell what frequent *Vows* we made;
Nor with what fervencie and zeal I prayed,
That God would graciouſly look down upon me,
And remove this reproach ſo grievous from me.
But all ſucceſſeleſſe; my unhappy womb,
Being as unfruitfull as a dead mans tomb.
It hapned that my Husband was to go
Unto the holy *Temple*, there to do
Some office of the Prieſthood, and perform
That part thereof that fell unto his turn.
His lot it was to ſtand before the Lord,
And in the *Temple* on the *Altar-board*
To *offer Incenſe* unto God moſt high,
Himſelf, alone; no creature ſtanding by

To

To give account of any thing at all,
Which in that place and action might befall.
The people ſtanding in the outer Court
(The place to which the other *Tribes* reſort)
There made their prayers, while the *Incenſe* burned,
And there they tarried till the *Prieſt* returned.
And wait they did indeed, th'impatient throng
Muttering, and vexing that he ſtaid ſo long.
But out he came at laſt confus'd, amazed,
Bereft of ſpeech, and like one frantick, gazed.
And by the ſtrangeneſſe of his *Apparition*,
It was conceived that he had ſeen ſome *Viſion*.
All he could tell them was to let them know
That he could tell them nothing. Having ſo
By certain ſignes made known that he was dumb,
He prepared all things for his coming home.
But though he made his wonted ſpeed, and more;
Th'ill news made greater, and was come before.
A generall mourning ceiz'd on all his friend
On the ſad News; nor did we put an end
To our laments, till he came back: whoſe face
Carried no *cloud* of ſorrow nor diſgrace.
He ſeem'd more cheerfull then before, and eat
With a more conſtant appetite his meat.
He had his ſenſes perfect, and his hand
By practis'd ſignes taught us to underſtand
What his tongue could not. "Thus in greateſt grief
"Doth gracious heaven vouchſafe poor men relief.
I know not how, but come to paſſe it did
That on the firſt night which we ſpent in bed

I felt strange changes in my self: Iesse feeding
Aptnesse to vomit, and the pangs of breeding.
My breasts and belly did begin to swell,
I long'd for every thing. Short tale to tell,
I found I had *Conceiv'd*. You need not doubt
But that my joyfull Soule did sally out
In songs of praise, for so great blessing given
To my dread Lord, the Lord of Earth and Heaven.
And yet for fear I might mistaken be
I kept my Chamber, and would neither see
Nor shew my self to any, till I found
More certain signes whereon my hopes to ground.
And now five moneths are past, since I betook
My self to this *Retreat*; nor had I broke
My resolution to have gain'd a Crown,
Had not thy welcome coming brought me down.
Here ended she. The Virgin thus begun
"More happy weomen then we two, the Sun
"Sees not in all his race, from the fresh East
Till he hath drench't his Horses in the West.
"Our joyes on both sides do abound, though thine
"Must needs fall short, compar'd with those of mine.
And there she stopt, & groand, as if oppress't
With too much weight; the *Spirit* in her breast
Making away her glories to relate,
And thus she sang her own *MAGNIFICATE*.

I

My Soule doth magnifie
The Lord most High.

My

My Spirit doth rejoyce in God the Word
My Saviour and my Lord.
For he his Hand-maid hath regarded,
And my Humility rewarded.

2

All Generations ſhall
From henceforth call
Me, the moſt bleſſed creature in his ſight.
For God of power and might
Great things for me hath done; His name
Be Hallowed alwaies for the ſame.

3

His Mercy is on them
That worſhip him,
World without end. He ſtretcheth out his hand,
And doth the Proud withſtand
Whom he ſhall ſcatter in all Nations,
With all their loud imaginations.

4

The Mighty from their throne
He doth put down.
But ſhall exalt the meek and humble wight.
The Poor is his delight.
To Whom good things he doth diſpence,
But ſends the Rich man emptie thence.

5

Recalling to his minde
His Mercies kinde
His ſervant *Iſrael* he hath viſited.
For ſo he promiſed

Our Father *Abraham* before,
And to his seed for evermore.
By this time some attendants brought them word
That *Zacharie* stood ready at the board;
Who having spent all day in meditation,
Did now expect them at a short Collation.
So down they went, and met the good old *Priest*,
Who with his hands and eyes advanced, blest
The holy *Virgin* first, and then the *meat*
But 'twas in signes, not words: The supper neat
Rather well cook'd then curious; such as shew'd
An hospitality more prais'd, then proud.
The dishes solid; and might well suffice
To please the palat, though not feed the eyes.
*Plenty* of all things, but no *waste*; such store
As serv'd the Table, and reliev'd the Poore.
And given with good affection did command
It self enough to Nature and a Friend.
"A well-poiz'd Bountie, and a sober Feast
"Befitting best the Table of a Priest.
Nothing did want the Table to enrich
But that variety of discourse, with which
The good old *Sire* did use to sawce his meat;
And make his entertainment more compleat
Then all his cost and care. "He gives best cheer
"Who fils the belly, and not starves the ear.
But what did want in words, his hand and eye
In most significant manner did supply:
And all the signes of joy he made, which might
Afford the *Virgin* welcome and delight.

Nor

Nor did the aged *Matron* fail t'expreſſe
In all her Applications and Addreſſe,
To ſhew how highly ſhe did prize the honour,
Which in this *Viſit* was beſtow'd upon her.
Thrice had pale *Cynthia* chang'd her face, the Sun
Had through a fourth part of the *Zodiake* run,
Well chaf'd and heated; ſince the *Virgin-Spouſe*
Had for this *viſit* left old *Joſephs* houſe.
And this ſhe did upon deſigne, that ſhe
Might ſo avoid his *importunitie*;
Till her ſwell'd womb no longer to be hid,
Might let him ſee ſhe was not for his bed.
But now *Elizabeths* time being coming on
When the great expectation of a Son
Was like to draw much concourſe of her Friends,
She thought it time to leave her dear commends
To her lov'd breſt, and to return again
From the Hill Countreys to her native *Plain*.
*Joſeph*, ſhe knew, ſhould ſhe make longer ſtay,
Would be the more impatient of delay;
Whoſe good *affection* wained from *deſire*,
It did concern her to preſerve entire.
Which her intent when firſt of all it came
Unto the hearing of the aged Dame, (prayers,
What motives were there uſed, what tears, what
To make that bleſſed woman longer theirs.
But when they ſaw the *Reaſons* which ſhe had
Did over-balance the requeſts they made,
They let her go in peace; and paſs'd their word
To let her know how graciouſly the Lord

Would

Would look upon them, when the time was come
For the unburthening of the *Matrons* womb.
And thus with many an heavie ſigh they parted,
The old man griev'd, the women broken-hearted;
But here my wearied Muſe craves leave to ſtay
Before ſhe follow themupon the way.

## The Prayer.

*ALmighty God by whoſe providence thy ſervant* John Baptiſt *was wonderfully conceived, and ſent to prepare the way of thy Son our Saviour, by preaching of Penance: make us ſo to follow his doctrine and holy life, that we may truly repent according to his preaching; and after his example conſtantly ſpeak the truth, boldly rebuke vice, and patiently ſuffer for the truths ſake, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. Amen.*

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## CANTO IIII.

*Poore* Joſeph *in a great diſmay*
*Reſolves to put his wife away.*
*The truth being by an* Angel *ſhewn,*
*He keeps her with him as his own.*
*A* Levite *tels the birth of* John,
*And how old* Zachary *finds his tongue.*

(Morn

THe Stars had ſpent their light. And now the
Open'd her *Purple Gates*, and gan t'adorn
The Heaven with *Roſes*, to prepare a way
For youthfull *Phœbus*, Father of the Day.

Who

Who first awakning from his watry Bed,
Seeing *Auroras* vilage blushing red;
And that divine *Phœbe* had resign'd the place
To him, commands the swift-wing'd houres apace
To bridle up his *Steeds*. What he commands
They strait perform. And with their nimble hands
Harnesse fierce *Phlegon*, and his furious Mates,
Nurst with *Ambrosian* sap, *divine Acates*;
And bring them to the *Sun*. Who takes his seat
Making their fiery-footed hoofs to beat
The known *Eccliptick line*: and rising quell'd
The dawning fogs, and the dark mists dispell'd.
The rising *Sun* having thus cleer'd the Aire,
The *Virgin-Spouse* doth for the way prepare;
Attended onely by her former train,
Save that old *Zacharie* did leave obtain,
For a young *Levite*, whom he much imploy'd,
Through the unpeopled woods to be her Guide.
A grave young man he was, of chast expression,
And one that was no shame to his Profession.
So on they went; the Aged pair much grieved
Of so divine a Guest to be bereaved.
The Sun had now attain'd to such a height
As to the known world gave more day then night:
And with his fierie beams so scorcht the Aire,
That *Travellers* were sorrie 'twas so fair.
But where the *Virgin* past, the glad Trees made
A *Bongrace* for her with their gentle shade.
Or else a *Canopy* of *Clouds* was seen
T'hang over, like a *Curtein* drawn between.

And when both chanc'd to fail, the freſh *wind* ſpent
A breathing gale upon her as ſhe went:
Refreſht with which, ſhe had both time and leiſure
To view Dame Natures works, the Countreys trea-
The hils were diapred with *Flowers*. The field (ſure.
Stood thick with Corn; and promiſed to yeeld
A wealthy Harveſt. The full ears bowed down,
As if they had a zeal to kiſſe the ground. (Flock
The *Plains* were cloth'd with Sheep, whoſe fruitfull
Gave food and rayment, yet increas'd the Stock.
Each Hedge-row was an orchard, whoſe rich fruit
Planted by Nature, made the *Gardner* mute,
And ſilenc'd his Profeſſion. The grown *Vines*
(The Nurſery of moſt delicious Wines)
Were ready for the *Vintage*; and did ſhow
That they did leſſe to *Art* then *Nature* owe.
The *Grapes* in ſwelling Cluſters, red and white,
Peep'd through the green leaves wth ſo rare delight
And made ſo ſweet a mixture; as would ſtrike
Deſpair in *Painters* to expreſſe the like.
A land in all Commodities ſo bleſt,
That *Milk* and *Honey* ſeem'd to be the leaſt.
With theſe delights they travell'd on the way
Till on the cloſing of the ſecond day
They came in ſight of *Nazareth*; and there
Staid *Joſeph* with ſome friends to meet his Dear.
Whom the glad man did with great joy receive.
And ſo the *Levite* humbly took his leave.
Now *Joſeph* look'd to have the conſummation
Of all his hopes ſo long in expectation:

The

The time being past, which interveend of right
Betwixt th' *Espousals* and the *Wedding night*.
Oft did he presse to have some day set down,
In which he might injoy her as his own.
which though she still put off with fain'd pretenses,
Yet she commanded both his heart and senses.
But when the heats were spent of his cold fires,
And long delay had cool'd his strong desires;
He could advisedly mark her: and might see
Her *Belly* bigger then 'twas wont to be; (pangs
Her *Breasts* more plump and swell'd; some sudden
To ceize her stomack, and a frequent change
Of countenance, not used. These common signes
Made him suspect, " and to suspitious mindes
" Weak proofs are strong. But when he came to
Her blood was in the ebb & left to flow; (know
(Which by enquirie he had found) he grew
To a conclusion of the point: and knew (found
By such sure proofes she was with child. Which
He threw himselfe groveling upon the ground,
Tearing his haire, lamenting his estate;
And thus bewail'd his most unhapy Fate.
" Ah poor old man, too old indeed to place
" Thy dying flames upon so faire a Face;
" Why did'st thou love at all, or rather why
" Did'st thou permit her from thy watchfull Eye
" So long an *Absence*. " Three moneths time away
" Full diet, ease, fresh company each day
" To a young woman may be strong Temptations
" Comes this of *Gossipings* and *Visitations*?

"Ah who could think that in so strict an house
"As that of *Zacharie*, there should be loose
"Affections stirring? Is there no place free
"Where lewd desires, and hot lusts will not be?
"Or rather who could think that one so chaste,
"So pure as *Mary* was, should thus at last
"Forfeit her Honour, and return defil'd,
"*Without a Father, Mother of a Child?*
"Or was it to be layed to me? must I
"Be made their stale, their hated *propertie*.
"Ill fall the time that ever I was born,
"Thus in my gray hairs to be made a scorn.
"Lord how my heart is over-charg'd with wo!
"Ah *Mary*, *Mary*, canst thou use me so?
"I see thou canst; And it concerns my fame
"To use quick diligence, and not own the name
"Of Husband to her, to a blood so wilde;
"*Without a Father, Mother of a Childe.*

This said, and rising from the pallid ground,
He cast himself upon his Bed; but found
The same debates, the same irresolution,
And knew not what to put in execution.
He knew, if he against her did proceed
As an *Adultresse*, that the Law decreed
No punishment but death; and his just soul
Abhorr'd the bare thought of an Act so foul,
So void of mercy, and benigne condition,
As to destroy her on a meer suspicion.
If he accused her as unchast, as one
Who *unbetroathed* that hated deed had done,

So

So foule a brand (he knew) would on her lye,
That *ſtignatiz'd* ſhe muſt both live and dye.
And he was loath that one ſo neer of kin
Should live defamed for ſo unclean a ſin.
But at the laſt his ancient Love took place
Of his juſt anger and unjuſt diſgrace;
Concluding to preſerve both fame and life,
Though not to keep her with him as a *Wife*.
And ſo reſolv'd in ſecret wiſe to ſend her
Back to her Friends, & to their care commend her.
Thus being vex in minde, a gentle ſleep
Fell on his heavy Eye-lids, and did keep
His ſenſes priſoners, ſtrongly bound, till they
Were looſned at the neer approach of day.
But though he ſlept faſt bound in chains of night,
His waking Soul beheld an heavenly light.
About his Bed ſo great a brightneſſe ſhin'd, (blind.
That the Worlds Eye, compar'd with that, was
And in this brightneſſe (as he lay diſmaid)
An *Angel of the Lord appear'd*, and ſaid,
"*Joſeph* thou Son of *David*, doeſt thou hear?
Yes Lord, ſaid he. Then *Joſeph* do not fear
"To receive *Mary* thy betroathed wife,
"And keep her as the *Jewel* of thy life.
"Thy fears and jealouſies are unjuſt; for ſhe
"Though her Womb ſwell, ſtill keeps her chaſtitie
"Firm and inviolate; as a *Fountain ſealed*
"A *Spring lockt up*, a *Garden un-revealed*.
"Is it, thinkſt thou, a luſt ſo lewd and wilde
"*Without a Father to conceive a Childe?*

"Hast thou forgot, or doest thou not believe
"This Text, *Behold a Virgin shall conceive.*
"Consult the Prophet, thou shalt find it there,
"*Behold a Virgin shall conceive, and bear,*
"And *bear a Son*, and *they shall call his name*
"*IMMANUEL.* This (*Joseph*) is the same;
"This, thy wife goes with, that *Immanuel*,
"That *God with us*, of which that Text doth tell.
"He, whom thy Spouse in her chast womb doth breed,
"Cals no man *Father*, tis the *Promised Seed.*
"The Ever-living God, the *Prince of Peace*,
"The *mighty Counseller*, Heavens blest increase:
"Begotten by no mortall Seed. This Son
"Must have no naturall *Conception.*
"It is the *Holy Ghosts* own Act, who can
"*Raise out of stones, Children* to *Abraham.*
"Therfore this *Childe*, when born, do thou receive,
"As the divinest blessing Heaven can give;
"And *JESUS* shalt thou call his Name. For he
"Shall take away the Worlds iniquitie,
"And save his people from their sins. 'Tis day,
"And I must hence. Give faith to that I say.
The *Angel* gone; *Joseph* half-sleeping said,
"Most blessed Lord, thy will shall be obeyed.
"How happy night, how happy place is this,
"Partakers of so rare so great a blisse.
"But of all mortall men the happiest I,
"To be instructed thus from God on high.
"By whom from Heaven an Angel hath been sent,
"To turn me from my fond and rash attempt.

Which

Which ſaid, and fully wakened, he gan riſe,
And offering up a double Sacrifice
Of praier and praiſes; He to *Mary* goes
And doth to her the nights ſucceſſe diſcloſe.
To which thus ſhe. "Dear friend I could have told
"All this before, durſt I have bin ſo bold
"As to diſcloſe Heavens ſecrets; or had gueſſ'd
"I ſhould finde credit in thy zealous breaſt.
"But ſince the Lord moſt high hath now revealed
"That which no longer was to be concealed;
"Let us ſo meet in purer flames that He
"May have the glory of our Chaſtitie;
"And yet this *Bleſſed Babe* incur no ſhame,
"In being called by no Fathers name.
*Joſeph* agreed, and felt more holy fires
Inflame his breaſt; his ſanctified deſires
Were bent on ſearth of a diviner love
Then that before, and fixt themſelves above.
And though his love to *Mary* ſtill remain'd
Yet was the ſeat and object of it chang'd
Gods Image in her ſoule, he now doth place
His loves upon, not *ADAMS* in her face.
It chanc'd that ſhortly after this Accord,
As they diſcourſ'd of theſe high matters; word
Was by an hand-maid to the *Virgin* brought,
That the good *Levite* did attend without:
He who train'd up by *Zachary*, was made
His Steward, and *Truſtee* of all he had.
The *Virgin* full of pregnant hopes to hear
Some joy full newes from thoſe ſhe held ſo deare;

Sent for him in. Right welcome was the man,
And having made due Reverence, thus began.
" My Patron *Zacharie* and his vertuous wife
" Wiſh all the comforts of an happy life
" To this bleſt houſe. By their expreſſe command
" I am here come to let you underſtand (done,
" What mighty things the Lord for them hath
" Since the production of their promiſed Son. (ſure
" His Birth had nothing ſtrange, except the plea-
" By the good *Matron* ſhewn, exceeded meaſure.
" Yet that not ſtrange, if for ſo great a grace
" Joy more then uſuall lightned in her face.
" The eight day being come, and great proviſion
" Of all things readie for the *Circumciſion*. (friends,
" Great concourſe was from ſeverall parts, of
" Coming, as oft it haps, for ſeverall ends.
" Some to attend the *Ceremonie*, ſome
" Did to congratulate the Parents come.
" Moſt to behold the Mother and the Childe;
" Concerning whom the Countrey had been fill'd
" With ſtrange and different Reports; but all
" To ſolemnize that joyfull Feſtivall.
" The Miniſter with all things ready ſtood,
" His knife, his clouts, the Baſin for the blood,
" And having askt them what the name ſhould be,
" Some of the *Friends* made anſwer, *Zacharie*,
" His Fathers name: And ſo it had been done
" Had not the Mother cryed, it muſt be *JOHN*.
" (The *Aged Matron* in this nomination
" Being guided (as it proved) by inſpiration.

But

" But againſt that was this objection framed
" That none of all the Kindred was ſo named.
" In fine it was agreed t'acquaint the *Father*,
" And to his pleaſure to refer the matter;
" Who took the *Writing-Tables*, and there-on
" Writ without pauſe or ſtay, *His name is JOHN.*
" At this the Companie much wondred; more
" When they perceiv'd him who ſeem'd dumb be-
" To ſtrain and offer at ſome words: but moſt (fore
" When he full-filled with the *Holy Ghoſt*,
" Chanted his *BENEDICTUS* to the Lord
" In a *Prophetick* ſtrain. Which word for word
" Exemplifi'd by his own hands, he ſends
" By me, preſented with his dear commends.
Which ſaid, the *written Tables* he preſents
To *Joſephs* hands, who thus read the Contents.

*The Song of* Zacharie.

THe Lord the mighty God of *Jacobs* ſeed
For evermore be bleſt and praiſed,
For them he hath redeem'd and viſited,
And unto us an Horn is rais'd
Of ſaving health, of ſtrength divine,
Out of his Servant *Davids* line.

2.

By all the holy Prophets hath he told
Which hath been ſince the world began;
That he would ſend and free us from the hold
Of wicked and malicious men.
And from the hands of thoſe, whoſe hate
Will never, towards us, abate.

3.

That ſo he might perform the Mercies kinde,
Which to our Fathers promiſed were;
And with his holy Covenant, call to minde
The Oath which He was pleas'd to ſwear
To *Abraham*; that he would beſtow
Some ſignall gift on us belowe.

4.

Which was, that we delivered from the hands
Of all our deadly Enemies,
Might, without fear, obey all his commands,
And worſhip him in godly wiſe.
And be, as in our deeds upright,
So, pure and holy in his ſight.

5.

And thou, my Babe, a Prophet ſhall men call
Of the moſt High, for thou ſhalt go
Before thy Saviour, and thy Lord, and all
His wayes before prepare: that ſo
Mans neer ſalvation may be ſhown,
And Pardon of his ſins made known.

6.

This hath Gods tender mercy for us wrought,
By which the *Day-ſpring* from on high
Is come to viſit us: and light hath brought
To them that do in darkneſſe lye;
And ſhades of death; and by that light
In wayes of Peace to guide our Feet.

The

The *Hymne* thus read did *Joſeph* much commend,
But more the *Virgin*, knowing to what end
It pointed moſt; and that her bleſſed Son
Was the chief *burthen* of the Song, not *John*.
Into her hands ſhe takes the *Tables*, and
Deſires the *Levite* they might underſtand
What elſe pertain'd to *Zacharie*; For ſhe
Conceiv'd a great part of the Hiſtorie
Was yet behinde; That ſo it was indeed
The *Levite* ſaid, and thus he did proceed.
"Great was the joy of all his Friends; though none
"Might with th'old *Matrons* hold compariſon,
"Who with her tongue, hands, eyes, & every part
"Expreſt the high contentments of her heart.
"But greateſt joyes and wonders have their end.
"And ſo had theſe. Which being paſt, the *Friends*
"With joynt conſent requeſted him to tell
"What in the holy *Temple* had befell,
"And how he was ſtrooke dumb. I am, ſaid he,
"Too much obliged to your humanitie,
"To make deny all. Tis a ſullen Feaſt
"When ſuch a favour is deny'd the Gheſt.
"So lifting up his hands, and giving glory
"To God on high, he thus began the ſtory.
"As I did ſtand (ſaith he) before the Lord
"And offered *Incenſe* on the Altar-board;
"A glorious beam of Majeſtie divine,
"Fill'd all the place, and did about me ſhine.
"My ſpirits fail'd me, and my troubled ſight
"Was dazeled, and grew dark by too much light.

At

"At last I might perceive an *Angel* stand
"Close by the *Altar*, nere mine own right hand.
"Naked he was, his flesh as pure did shew
"As untouch't *Lillies*; or the new-faln Snow.
"His haire hung down in curles of Gold, his face
"A perfect Magazin of every Grace.
"In which unpattern'd sweetnesse seem'd to strive
"With *Majestie*, for the Prerogative.
"A face so mixt, of so sweet a beautie,
"As did at once command both love and duty.
"His lips more red the Corrall; and his Eyes
"Cast flames like lightning darted from the skies.
"The Feathers of his wings outflew the wind
"Pluck'd from the *Phœnix* or some bird of *Inde*
"Which shew'd like burnish: Gold, most rich most faire
"With which well-poizd he hovered in the Aire.
(The *Virgins* colour chang'd at this Relation,
Which he not noting followed his *Narration*.)
"This glorious shape when he observ'd my fear,
"Said, *Zachary* be not afraid, draw neare.
"Thy prayers are heard; thy wife shall bear a son
"In her old age, and thou shalt call him *JOHN*.
"Much joy & gladnesse shalt thou have on Earth,
"In these last daies of thine: and at his birth
"Shall many *Jews* rejoyce with unfain'd heart,
"Whom from their sins to God he shall convert.
"Great shall he be in Gods esteem, by whom
"The *Holy Ghost* shall in his Mothers womb
"Be given unto him. And do thou take heed
"He drink no wines, nor drinks which do exceed

In

"In heat or ſtrength. Aſwell the power, as ſpirit
"Of great *Elijah* ſhall the Child inherit.
"And in that power and ſpirit ſhall he go
"Before the Lord, *make plain his waies*, and ſo
"Prepare the ſouls of mortall men to take
"Celeſtiall ſeed into their breaſts; and make
"The ſon conform unto his fathers will
"And diſobedient hearts with wiſdome fill.
"All this (ſaid he) I heard, but ſo diſmaid,
"I durſt not credit what the *Angel* ſaid.
"But aſkt, how I might be aſſur'd, the Word
"Which ſounded in my eares, came from the Lord;
"My doubts were ſtronger then my faith: I told
"That both my ſelf & wife were now grown old,
"Paſt hope of Children; I deſir'd to know
"His name: ſaid he (halfe moved) it ſhall be ſo
"My fellow *Angels* do me *Gabriel* call.
At this, the *Virgin* let the *Tables* fall,
And ſuddenly cried out, Tis He, tis He,
The very ſame which did appeare to me.
I finde by the deſcription tis the ſame,
How glad am I that I have found his name.
For though my mind, and all my ſenſes were
Diſtracted and amaz'd twixt hope and fear,
Yet did I well obſerve his form, and take
A perfect Caracter of him as he ſpake.
Which ſaid, and half-abaſh'd at what was done,
She held her peace. The Levite thus went on.
"My name is *Gabriel*, did the *Angel* ſay,
"I ſtand before Gods preſence night and day,

And

"And am ſent hither by the heavenly King
"This joyfull tydings to thy houſe to bring.
"Which ſince thou doſt not credit, thou ſhalt ſee
"A miracle to confirm it. Henceforth be
"*Dumb* as a Fiſh, as *ſpeechleſſe* as a ſtone,
"And ſpeak no more till all theſe things be done.
"This ſaid, he vaniſh'd, and I ſtood confounded
"At my own unbelief, and doubly wounded
"With loſſe and ſhame. What afterwards befell
"As a thing known, there is no need to tell.
"But ſure I am that every word he ſpoke
"Shall be fulfill'd. Gods Word is never broke.
Here the good Father ended; and the Gheſt
With thanks to God and him, began the Feaſt.
The ſtory pleas'd the happy pair, but moſt
The *Virgin-wife*; with whom no word was loſt
In all the *Narrative*. For ſtill ſhe found
Her *bleſſed Babe* to be the ſcope and ground
Of all *Johns* glories; whoſe preceding Birth,
Serv'd but to be his huiſher on the Earth.
The gentle *Levite* being kindly feaſted
Humbly took leave, and to the *Woodlands* haſted.
With whom I finde a great deſire to go,
But that my tyr'd *Muſe* will not have it ſo.

## The Prayer.

*ALmighty God, give us grace that we may caſt away the works of darkneſſe, and put upon us the Armour of light, now in the time of this mortall life, (in which thy Son* JESUS CHRIST *came to viſit us in great humilitie) that in the laſt day when he ſhall come again in his glorious majeſtie to judge both the quick and the dead, we may riſe to the life immortall, through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the holy Ghoſt. Amen.*

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## CANTO V.

CHRIST *born; the heavenly* Angels *ſing*
*A* Chriſtmaſſe Carol *to their King.*
*The* Shepherds *do to* Beth'lem *go,*
*And there they* Caroll *it alſo.*
*They blaze the News; the Babe ſo famed*
*Is* circumcis'd, *and* JESUS *named.*

NOw had the *Winters* ſharper breath begun
To over-powre the low-declining Sun;
To glaze the Lakes and chryſtalize the Floods,
And periwig with *Ryme* the Bald-pate Woods.
The ſcatter'd houſes in the Fields did ſhow
Like Rocks of ice, or mountains made of Snow,
Under the *Artick-Circle*: and within
Sate the poore houſhold, holding every Chin
Over two ſticks acroſſe, with more deſire
To blow their nails off, then blow out the Fire.

The

The benumm'd *Earth* had ſhewn her rugged face,
Had not this white veil covered her diſgrace:
And into her cold *Womb* receiv'd again,
The flowers and plants which beautifi'd the Plain.
Or if that *Boreus* did abate his rage,
And his moſt bitter blaſts, awhile aſſwage:
Then entred *Auſter*, with his hair all wet,
His Beard with mists, his Brows with clouds beſet.
His boſome full of ſhewers, his Wings of rain,
Which ſqueez'd by his black hands pour'd down amain.
And did reduce the world to its firſt matter,
Covering the Earths dark face with mud & water.
And though *Judea* boaſt a milder Clime,
Then this *cold North*; yet there the Winter-time
Is ſenſible, as here, to young and old.
The pureſt Aire admits the ſharpeſt cold.
From the firſt day of her *Annuntiation*
The *Virgin* found by certain *Calculation*
That thrice three Moons had vaniſh'd out of ſight,
And thrice three times renewed their borrowed light.
And now the time drew neer, ſhe was to be
(Bleſt Soul) disburthened of a *Deitie*.
In all this time with *Joſeph* did ſhe live
With as much plenty as that houſe could give.
Eſteem'd his *Wife*, becauſe they liv'd together:
But look'd on by him as an Heavenly treaſure,
Which he approach'd not, but with ſuch reſpects
As did befit the wonder of her Sex.
And in this time they joyntly did prepare
Things fit and decent for the *Birth*. No care

Did

Did want on her part, nor no coſt on his,
For the reception of ſo high a bliſſe;
Which his eſtate could bear. What ſerv'd for pride
And pomp, they had not, or elſe layd aſide.
Yet thoſe proviſions though but plain and mean
Superfluous prov'd. God pleas'd to charge the *Scene*
Of this great Action, and therewith to grace
An *unreveal'd* but *predeſtinated* Place.
For as they did of theſe Affairs confer,
A *Publican*, a *Tribute-gatherer*
Entred the roome, and tendred them a *Bill*
In which twas written " that it was the will
" Of great *Auguſtus* whom the Earth obeyed,
" A generall tax ſhould on the world be layed:
" And that all Perſons of each Sex, which were
" Within the age of Tribute, ſhould repair
" To their *Head-City*, or their *Mother-Town*,
" And there the rated *Poll-money* pay down.
They both receiv'd the Summons, and not ſlow
To yeeld obedience, towards *Bethlem* go;
*Bethlehem* the *Town of David*, of whoſe houſe
Both *Joſeph* was, and his chaſt *Virgin-Spouſe*.
The wayes not paſſable, at beſt not fair,
And no great comfort in a Winter-aire.
And though no doubt, a *Woman in her caſe*,
Had been diſpenc'd with, both for time and place.
Yet ſuch a mighty power within her wrought,
So ſtrong a ſpirit ſwaid, that ſhe was brought
To go the journey with ſo fixt a minde;
As by no means ſhe would be left behinde.

Moſt

Moſt Mighty God, how I admire thy waies,
How would my ſoul thy power, thy wiſdom praiſe.
Who by ſuch ſtrange meanes doeſt effect thy will,
And all thy ſecret purpoſes fullfill.
By thee this great affaire thus ordered was
To bring the holy Prophets word to paſſe,
That out of *Bethlem*, *Davids Town*, ſhould ſpring
The worlds *Meſſiah*, *Iſraels* promiſed *King*.
To *Bethlehem* they are come, but there they finde,
Worſe entertainment then the waies and winde.
Scarce had he trod on the appointed ground
But by ſure ſignes and pregnant proofes ſhe found
That her pure *Virgin-womb* did preſſe to be
With ſpeed, disburthened of *Divinity*.
But ſuch was her hard Fate, that all the Town
Would not vouchſafe a place to lay it down.
The *Innes* were taken up, and every roome
Or fill'd, or kept for better Gheſts to come.
And though poor *Joſeph* ſpar'd no paines but had
Made the beſt haſt he could, his luck was bad
From every houſe the anſwer ſtill was one,
They would have better Gheſts, or elſe have none.
"Nothing ſeemes viler to a wordlings Eyes,
"Then richeſt vertue in a poor diſguize.
At length an ancient *Begger* told him this,
"In yonder *Suburb* toward th' Eaſt, there is
"A *Cavern* under ground, of purpoſe made
"In Summer heates to yeeld the Cattell ſhade.
"A place where we poor creatures ſometimes lye
"In theſe cold times of *colder Charity*.

"But 'twill this night be free, in hope we may
"Either find Pitie, or else meet some Prey (hither,
"In that great swarm of people which come
"For love or fear, t'attend great *Cæsars* pleasure.
And so they parted. Full of high content
The *Virgin* was, and to the *Cave* they went.
Vnhappy *Bethlemites*, can you afford
No better welcome to your Supreme Lord?
Did he come down from Heaven, and shall he have
No roome on earth, but under t'h *Earth*, a Cave?
Are *David* and his Acts so soon fore-done?
No place in *Davids Town* for *Davids sonne*?
But O blest *Cave*, how famous shalt thou be
In the *Records* of all Posteritie?
How glorious art thou made by this resort?
"*It is the Prince his presence makes the Court.*
Into the *Cave* they entred, and there found
An *Oxe*, an *Asse*, unto the *Manger* bound.
Poor company God wot, in such a case,
But such as well enough beseem'd the place.
Creatures of greater sence and better mind
Then those whom in the Town they left behinde.
These *knew their Master*, and with reverence meet
Did cast themselves before him at his feet.
For scarce they had that homely house possest
When the pure *Virgin-wife*, for ever blest
Without the throwes of Child birth or the grone
Of a rack'd womb, brought forth her onely Son.
*Midwife* she needed none, there came none in,
For there could be no *Curse* where was no *Sinne*.

*Eves* punishment had no place here. No fears
Of paine pursued this *birth*, no cause of teares.
A *Benjamin* this was, no child of woe;
Who if (as other Infants use to do)
At his first entrance in the world he *cried*,
Twas to *bewaile their sins* for whom he dyed.
Good God, what joyes were there in Heaven above
Vpon the birth of this great God of love.
How did the *Angels* hasten from the skies,
To borrow new light from his glorious Eyes.
With what affection did they kisse each limb,
How did they strive who first should worship him.
All strived, and with reverence meet ador'd
This *first begotten Son of God*, the Lord.
So did they praise God for him, and so blest him
His *Mother* hardly could have leave to kisse him.
Whose turn being come, with what *Celestiall* fires
Offered she for this sonne of her desires
The *Sacrifice* of *Prayer* and *Praise* to Heaven,
By whom this Babe was got, this Son was given.
With what strange raptures did she view his Face,
Kisse him, and then admire each severall grace.
With what devotion did she by him stand
And naile her lips unto his Sacred hand.
Ah *Blessed Maid* of all thy Sex most blest,
Never was mortall with such joyes possest.
Which since to tell, so far exceed's my might
Better be silent then not do thee right.
Who when she found that al which she could do
Gave but an hungrie satisfaction to

Her

Her greedy ſoul; and that the more ſhe gazed
Vpon his face the more ſhe was amazed;
She caſ'd the *Jewell* up. Some ſhift ſhe made
Out of that ſlender *ward-robe* that ſhe had
Few clouts to fit, with which ſhe did him ſwadle;
And made the *Manger* ſerve him for a *Cradle*.
Where having lodg'd him, down ſhe fall's & prai'd
And in a ſacred rapture thus ſhe ſaid.
"Haile the worlds wonder; heaven & earth is one
"Both of a mortall, but begot of none;
"A Babe which cannot ſpeake, and yet the *Word*,
"In form a *Servant*, but in power the *Lord*.
"The *Son* of man, yet calleſt no man *Father*;
"Not God, nor man, but God and man together.
"Which to the *Simple*, *Wiſdom* give'ſt, and yet
"Art counted *Fooliſhneſſe* by men of *Wit*:
"Welcome, O welcome thou *Eternall Babe*,
"Into the *World* which firſt by thee was made.
"Ah bleſſed God how wondrous are thy waies.
"How gladly would my ſoul ſet forth thy praiſe.
"Which who ſo hopes, though but in part expreſſe
"The *Tongues of men and Angels* muſt poſſeſſe.
"Which ſaid, ſhe roſe, yet could not go away,
Till ſhe had kiſſ'd the *Manger* where he lay.
Nor muſt poor *Joſeph* be deny'd his part
In this great joy, who lifted up his heart
And bleſt the Lord for all that had been done,
In ſending to the world his onely Sonne.
T'was now about the time when daies cleer light
Was totally withdrawn from mortall ſight

Inſteed whereof, in ugly ſolitude
Night with his mantle which is dark and rude
Had cover'd all the *Hemiſphere* about;
The lamps of *Joves* high houſe were half burnt out.
And the great *Monarch* of the ſhades did keepe
The eyes of men faſt bound in chaines of ſleep.
Onely ſome carefull *Sheepherds* were awake,
Who of their Flocks by night the charge did take;
And to ſpin out the tedious houres, did hold
Diſcourſe together, ſuch as Shepherds could.
When ſuddenly, Behold a glorious light
Turn'd night to day, and made the day ſeem night.
Heaven opened, & there ſhin'd ſo bright a beam,
Of divine glory, that it overcame
Th' affrighted Shepherds; who in great diſmay
Fell on the ground and trembled as they lay.
When lo, an *Angel of the Lord* appear'd,
And ſtretching out his gracious hands, uprear'd
The more then half dead man; and thus he ſaid,
"Draw nerer gentle Shepherds, be not fraied.
"I bring you tidings of great joy from Heaven
"To you a Child is born, a Son is given.
"To you and to all people do I bring (King,
"Glad newes; A *Saviour*, *CHRIST*, the Lord and
"Is this day born. See you not yonder Town?
"Yon *Bethlehem*? In a *Stable* under ground
"There you ſhall find him in a *Manger* laied,
"And in courſe clouts of linen meanly raied.
"An obſcure *Palace*, and an homely Weed
"For ſuch a Prince; but 'tis the *Promiſed ſeed*,

'Tis

'Tis the *Messiah*. Shepherds haste away,
And see the joyfull wonders of this day.
No sooner had the holy *Angel* ended,
But millions of the *heavenly Host* descended,
In form so glorious, and in Robes so bright
As caus'd at once amazement and delight.
Who in an heavenly consort joyn'd, did sing
A sacred Anthem to their Lord and King.
Which afterwards abroad the Shepherds blazed,
As one call'd *Cephas* had thus *paraphrased*.

1.

*Glorie be to God on high,*
The Father of an infinite Majestie;
The same likewise be done
To th'honourable true, and onely Son.
Like laud and praise we do refer
Unto the holy Ghost the Comforter.
To God the *Cherubims* do crie,
And *Seraphims* continually,
Thrice Holy thou, O Lord of Hosts,
Of might, of power, and glorie most.

2.

*Peace be upon the Earth,*
On this *Immanuels*, on this *Man-Gods* birth.
For in this new-born Child,
Shall God to man be wholly reconcil'd.
See, wars in all the world do cease,
To make way for this blessed *Prince of Peace.*
Of glory he is King alone,
The Fathers everlasting Son.

In chains of love he men shall binde,
And make them of one heart, one minde.

3.

*Good will be towards men,*
Whom God redeems, not from th'old Lyons den
Not for their merit nor for treasure,
But onely of his own good will and pleasure.
And this *Good will* He doth perform,
In th'Infant long since promis'd, newly born.
Who to deliver man is come,
And abhorr'd not the Virgins Womb.
And going hence shall leave us still
A Testament of this *Good will.*

Thus did the heavenly hosts their *Caroll* end,
And with a great shout back to Heaven ascend.
Which seen, the Shepherds cheer'd up one another,
And thus they said. "It fits us not to smother
"The joyfull news w^ch we this night have heard.
"Never hath *Angel* of the Lord appear'd,
"But all his Acts desery'd to be inroll'd
"In leaves of brasse, and characters of gold.
"But let us first to *Beth'lem* go, and take
"Full view of those things, which the *Angel* spake.
To this they all agreed, and now are gone
Half way to *Bethlehem*; when thus said one,
"Our fellow *Cephas* is a jolly Swain,
"Can sing the best of any on the Plain,
"And hath good choice too: let us him intreat
"When we are there, some *Caroll* to repeat;

Some

"Some one of those which Father *Seth* did sing,
"When in disguize he once receiv'd our King.
Said *Cephas*, gladly shall I yeeld unto
So fair a motion, and shall therein do
My self much honour. You could hardly name
An happinesse at which I more should aime.
So on they went, not slacking speed nor pace
Untill they came to the expected place.
Into the *Cave* they entred, where they found
The *Virgin-Mother* prostrate on the ground,
Emptying her soul to God; old *Joseph* by;
With eyes cast down, and hands lift up on high.
The new-born Babe was in the *Manger* laid,
(Wrapt in his linnens) as the Angel said.
And, which they most of all admir'd to see,
The *Ox* and *Asse* upon their bended knee,
Adoring the new-birth. The Shepherds mark
These severall postures; though the place was dark:
There seeming a refulgent light to rise
Out of the splendor of the *Infants* eyes.
Which seen, thus *Cephas*. "Health and joy, said he
"Be from the Lord to this small Familie.
"Commanded by an *Angel*; we are come
"To see this new-born Babe, Gods onely-Son.
"Of whom strange matters have to us been told,
"Which when you please to hear, we shall unfold.
And looking back, Come fellow Swains, he said,
"You now shall have the Song, my promise made
"Binds me to sing; do you supply the *Quire*,
"And bear the burden; more I not desire.

Which said, his *Gittern* he uncas'd, and than
Turning his voice thereto, he thus began.

1.

WHat light is that breaks forth the skies
So long before the *morning Star.*
Which makes it noon before the Sun doth rise;
And doth his glories dart so far.
See; is't not *Pan* the Shepherds King,
Of whom our sacred Poets sing.
*Cho.* Tis he, 'tis he, the true God *Pan,*
Chief Shepherd of the Soul of man.

2.

How high an honour's to us done,
That the great Master of the sheep
Heavens blest increase, the untouch'd womans Son,
Vouchsafes in Shepherds coat to sleep.
To cloth himself in our vile weed,
And with poore Swains his Flocks to feed.
*Cho:* Welcome, more welcome Shepherds King,
Then the first Lamb, or early Spring.

3.

Strew all the ground on which he goes
With *Violets* and *Cowslips* sweet;
Let every place he treads on spring a Rose;
And make a water for his feet
Made of the spirits of *April* showers
Mixt with the juyce of *July-Flowers.*
*Cho:* For this, O this, is great God *Pan,*
Chief Shepherd of the Soul of Man.

Thus

Thus ended they their *Chriſtmas Song*. Which done,
The *Virgin-Mother* looking on her Son,
As if from him ſhe took her whole direction,
Return'd them thanks for their ſo great affection:
And much deſir'd that *Cephas* would relate
Such paſſages concerning their eſtate
As from the *Angel* they had heard that night;
And ſo mix profit with their firſt delight.
The *Shepherd* was not coy, but kindly yeelds,
And tels of all that hapned in the Fields:
Which as to her he truly did impart,
So with like faith ſhe laid it in her heart.
Theſe offices perform'd, they might eſpie
That a freſh bluſh had beautifi'd the skie,
And night grown weary of it ſelf, given way
To *Phoſphorus* to uſher in the day.
Which ſeen, with ſouls replete with joy and mirth,
They went away the gladeſt men on Earth.
Into the Town they went, and there declar'd
The wondrous things which they had ſeen & heard.
How the firſt *Angel* look'd, and what he ſaid;
The heavenly Muſick by th'whole *Conſort* made:
What they had met with in the *Cave*; the *Childe*
How meanly clad, with what a grace it ſmil'd.
Of moſt ſweet looks, yet carrying in the face
Terror with ſweetneſſe, Majeſtie with grace.
And having ſpread theſe joyfull news abroad,
Home they return'd, praiſing the Lord their God.
Moſt joyfull news indeed, but entertain'd
Rather with *wonder* then with joy unfain'd.

And

And yet that wondring of so short a date,
That it took cold even in the greatest heat
Much talk there was about it too. Each tongue
Spent on that stock. The nurse had suffered wrong
Had it not serv'd for *Table-talk* at least
And sav'd a *Dish*, yet lengthened out the *Feast*.
Towards the Stable doore, or *Cave*, walk't some,
And there perhaps might see what had been done.
And having seen, were edified no more
Now by their *Eyes*, then by their *Ears* before.
None laid it to their hearts, or did conceive
It was a point concern'd them to beleive,
Or build an hope upon it. And so fast
The very noise decreas'd; that at the last
The Newes which flowed so strongly at full tide
After a *nine daies wonder*, ebb'd and died,
But leaving here these unbeleiving *Jews*,
To their stiffe incredulity, my *Muse*
Must hasten back to the exalted Stable,
There to attend my Saviour in the *Cradle*.

Seven times the Sun had beautified the Earth
With its resplendent Beames, since this new Birth
Had more adorn'd it by a light divine.
And now the Eight day did begin to shine.
When *Joseph* by the *Virgin* was desir'd
To *Circumcise* the Babe, as Law requir'd.
This Sacrament requir'd no *Priest*; the Rite
Was, for the *Minister*, indefinite.
And who more fit then *Joseph*, to discharge
An Office which the Law had left at large.

Thrice

Thrice happy *Joseph*, if at least twere thou
That mad'st thy blessed Saviour feel and know
The bondage of the *Law*, and thereby see
What blood it did require to set men free.
Thrice happy hand, by which he first began
To be obedient to the *Law* for man.
An Act of high concernment, of great weight
In the repair of Mans decai'd estate;
Yet acted with so little pomp, so done
As if 'twere neither *Gods* nor *Joseph's* Son.
No *Feast* there was to solemnize the day.
The place unfit, their best friends far away;
And those of *Bethlehem* of such rugged brests,
That th'*Ox* and *Asse* had been the lovelier guests.
As for the Name, that was resolv'd in Heaven,
And notice of it by two *Angels* given;
Two glorious *God-Fathers*, who did proclaim,
That *JESUS*, *JESUS* was to be his Name:
In due obedience to whose *high Commission*;
They nam'd him *JESUS* at his *Circumcision*.
A blessed Name, but of a more heavenly nature,
A *Saviour sounds more sweet then a Creator*.
Most blessed *JESUS*, at thy Name I bow
The knees both of my Soul and Bodie too.
Thou savest Soul and Body both, and shalt
Both Soul and Body in due time exalt
To blisse immortall: and shalt therefore have
The bended knees of both, who both doest save.
O blessed *JESUS*, what an ardent flame
Warms my affections to extoll thy Name.

But ſince t'expreſſe it as of right is due,
Few words are none, and many are but few.
I ſhall not ſtrive theſe *Graces* to reherſe,
Which muſt be done in wonder, not in verſe.

Reſt therefore here my *Muſe*, reſt here awhile,
And fit thy ſelf for a more tedious toyl.
Borrow the *Mornings wings*; for after reſt,
I have a journey for thee to the *Eaſt*.

## The Prayer.

*ALmighty God which haſt given us thy onely begotten Son to take our Nature upon him, and to be born of a pure* Virgin; *grant that we being* regenerate *and made thy children by* Adoption *and* Grace, *may daily be renewed by thy holy Spirit: And as thou madeſt the ſame thy moſt bleſſed Son to be* circumciſed, *and obedient to the Law for man; ſo grant us the true* Circumciſion *of the Spirit, that our hearts and all our members being mortified from all worldly and carnall luſts, may in all things obey thy bleſſed will through the ſame thy Son* JESUS CHRIST *our Lord. Amen.*

CANTO

## CANTO VI.

*A* Star *appearing in the East*
*Conducts the* Wise-men *to the West.*
*They* Herod *see, with his consent*
Adore *the Babe, their* gifts *present.*
*The Virgin-Mother* purified;
Simeon *and* Anna *prophecied.*

FAce Eastward where the morning Sun doth rise
An happy and a fruitfull Land there lies;
In all things surfeiting, which may delight
A covetous and carnall appetite.
There do full streams of Milk and *Nectar* flowe,
From the high Oke honey fals down belowe.
Each shrub drops *Frankincense*, in every Green
Are odoriferous beds of *Spices* seen.
Nor can one find a Grove, where may not be
Some barks & gums more worth then all the Tree.
Small labour serves to till the fertile soyl;
Tis *Autume* onely is the time of toyl: (Wain,
When the tir'd Ploughman cracks his wearied
By loading and re-loading it again. (bear,
Both flowers and plants the undress'd ground doth
Tis either Spring, or Harvest alwayes there.
And yet the greatest wealth lyes most within,
The richest beauties in the parts unseen.
For when the labouring man turns up the mould,
If he dig deep, he finds lesse Earth then Gold.
To speak it in a word, let this suffice,
It was next neighbour unto *Paradise*.

An

An happy land, yet happier in her Kings
Then Mines of Gold, or the perpetuall ſprings;
Their Princes there were men of mighty parts,
Skill'd in the *Languages*, and *liberall Arts*.
Men ſtudied in deep wayes, and ſuch as made
The *miracles* of Nature, but a trade.
Such as conſulted with the Heavens, and there
Could tell what Stars belong'd to every Sphere;
And of each Star the name and motion knew
Which God firſt made; And who could look for new
But ſo it chanc'd, that when they leaſt did look
To find new matter in ſo old a Book;
They might perceive a flaming light to riſe,
Which never had, till then, adorn'd the skies:
A light in beautie and in brightneſſe, far
Paſſing the luſtre of the faireſt Star.
And which amaz'd them moſt, it did not move
Circular-wiſe, or like the reſt above:
For neither did it follow the *Firſt mover*,
Nor like a *Meteor* in the Aire did hover;
But ſtood ſtill fixt, and with its radiant face,
Pointed directly to one certain place.
This found, they take their *Inſtruments* in hand,
And upon long ſearch came to underſtand
That this created Star, this new great light,
Look'd at the City of the *Jebuſite*.
And that amongſt thoſe of the *Jewiſh* Nation,
Some wondrous change was now in agitation.
Full of deſire to know the full contents,
They take their *Books*, and leave their *Inſtruments*.

Much

Much pains they took, turn'd over many a line
In *Zoroaster*, *Hermes* the Divine,
*Jannes* and *Jambres* skill'd in Magick lore
And *Atlas* that profound Astronomer:
But all in vain. At last they catt their eyes
Upon the Book of *Balaams Prophecies*. (made
In which, though much defac'd with age, they
A shift to read a *Prophecie*, which said.

In *Jacobs* house a *Star* shall rise,
And therewithall a *Scepter* spring
Out of the Stock of *Israel*.
The seed of *Moab* he shall quell,
Over the Nations rule as King,
And vanquish all his Enemies.

(ground,
Right glad were they when they had got this
On which a *Judgement* by their Art to found.
Concluding that this King must now be born,
Who all these glorious actions should perform.
And that this *Star* did both proclaim his Birth,
And pointed to his *Palace* on the Earth.
In these conjectures happy. Yet their minde
Was still unsatisfi'd, nor can they finde
A way to solve their doubts, unlesse they go
Into *Judea*, the full truth to know.
And go they will, some of the Chiefs at least
To make discovery, and inform the rest;
To see this new-born King to *Israel* given,
Whose birth by such strange means was shown from Heaven,

And

And to preſent him with precious ſweets,
Wherein their Countrie all the world exceed's.
A ſtrange Reſolve, but conſtantly purſued
By men of Power, with greateſt parts endued.
And yet no *Curioſity*, no vaine.
Deſire moved here, to ſhew their pomp and traine;
Nor did it from the depth's of *State-craft* ſpring,
To become gracious with the *Infant King*.
No. It was Gods own doing to inſpire
Their knowing breſts with ſuch a ſtrong deſire;
'Twas he incited them to undertake
This tedious journey, for his dear ſons ſake.
That by this meanes his Titles might be ſhown;
Firſt to the *Jews*, then to the *world* made known.
Guided by this *good Spirit* on they went,
The end propoſ'd giving ſuch rich content,
As ſweetned and endear'd both cold and wind
And all extreams which they were like to find.
But one great comfort they injoyed; the *Star*
Marching before them as their *Harbinger*.
I ſhall forbear to name the Rocks and Mountains,
The Woods & Deſarts, the deep Lakes & Fountains,
Which they paſt by, and conquered on the way;
And bring them to the place without delay,
From whence *HIERVSALEM* they might deſcrie
Giving a gallant Proſpect to the eye.
A City built on hils, incompaſſ'd round
With high raiſ'd Walls, & trenches moſt profound.
And on thoſe Hils ſo many ſtately Towers,
Such Princely Palaces, and curious Bowers.

Expoſe

Expose themselves to the Obspectators sight,
As fill the ravish't senses with delight.
There on *Mount Sion*, stands the ancient seat
Of Princely *David* and his line, a great
And goodly structure, which no curious eye
Could charge with want of grace or Majestie.
And on another rising ground there shin'd
King *Herods* new built Palace, whose proud mind
Disdeign'd the old *Seat Royall*, as a place
Which smelt too strongly of the *Jewish* Race.
And for himself had rais'd this glorious peece
In which the pride of *Rome*, and wits of *Greece*
Met and consulted how each severall part
Might be disputed between Cost and Art.
Houses of lesser note they look'd not on
Nor on the Palace built by *Solomon*
For the *Egyptian* Princesse, his lov'd Queen,
Thought gallant piles, and worthy to be seen.
Nor could they on the *Temple* fix, or stay.
Their strong desires had so beguil'd the way,
That unawars, and half against their will
They were come close to the next Eastern Hill
On which the City stood; and as the Sun
Clos'd up the Evening, was their journey done.
No sooner had they entred, and refresht
Their wearied Limbes which long expected rest,
But presently they made inquirie, where
Of this new King they might some tydings hear.
"Where is, say they, He that is newly born
"King of the *Jews*, whose Temples do adorn

" The Crown he wears, and shal advance his name
" Unto the highest pinacle of fame. (on high,
" Whose birth hath been proclaim'd from heaven
" By a *new Star* appearing in the skie:
" Which in the East first shew'd his glorious Ray,
" Since march'd before us to direct the way,
" And left us not untill we came in ken
" Of this great City of *Jerusalem*.
" Acquaint us where He is, that we may see
" This *Infant-Monarch*, who by Heavens decree
" Shall rule this Nation, and extend his power
" From the West Ocean to the Eastern shore.
" Say, tell us where he is, that we *may go*
" *And worship him*. 'Tis that we come to do. (pains,
" Who from the parts far East, have took those
" Onely to worship him, and home again.

These words oft sounding in their ears, amaz'd
Th'incredulous Jews, who on each other gaz'd
With doubtfull eyes; and knew not what to say,
Whether 'twere *Canon* or *Apocrypha*.
Dull, heavie souls, so torn twixt hope and fear,
They durst not credit what they long'd to hear.
But amongst those of *Herods* faction grew
A mighty clamour; who, should this prove true,
Must loose their King, and with him that command
Which they had got upon that conquer'd land.
Nor could they rest till they to *Herod* brought
This dreadfull news: and so on him they wrought,
That 'twas resolv'd, the Infant once been found
To bury all his Glories in the ground.

The

The next care was to find him out; but that
Prov'd not a point of any long debate.
For when the *Chief Priest* & the *Scribes* commanded
T'attend on *Herod*, were by him demanded
What happy place that was, which should be blest
With the *Messiahs* birth; both *Scribe* and *Priest*
Made answer, *Bethlem*. *Bethlem* was the place
By God predestin'd to so great a grace.
Now did the *Tyrant* think himself secure
From his fear'd *Rivall*; but to make all sure
The *Magi* must be dealt with to advance
The lewd designe by their *intelligence*.
So easily thought those of *Herods Schools*,
To cheat their God, and make these *Wise-men* fools.
The project pleas'd. *Herod* in private wise
Invites them to the Court; their *enterprize*
He cunningly inquir'd into, the day
Of the *Stars* first appearing, ask'd; which they
Inform'd him truly in: assur'd of this,
"Man could not curse where God resolv'd to blesse.
Then *Herod* thus. "Pursue your brave intent
"Ye mighty *Sages* of the *Orient*,
"To *Bethlem* go, use all your wisest care
"To find the Babe, of whom such wonders are
"Foretold you in the Book of Heaven; and when
"Your wish succeeds, return to me agen,
"That I may go and worship him; and do
"My *homage* to this great *Messiah* too.
So said the holy Fox; and saying so,
Gave them his *Royall Passe*, and let them go.

Much joyed the *Wisemen* in the Kings protection,
But more that they had gaind so good direction,
To find the place for wch their hearts were bound.
cc Things often times unsought are soonest found.
So on they went with joy, the paines but small,
The journey short, not past six miles in all.
Yet lest too strict a search might chance to bring
Some unfear'd danger to the Infant King;
Behold the *Star*, which had withdrawn his light
For some daies past appear'd againe in sight
And in a strait and *perpendicular* line,
Over the place where the Babe lay, did shine.
As aged *NOAH* toss'd on the watrie maine
When he perceiv'd the *Dove* return againe,
Bringing an *Olive leafe*, and knew thereby
The waters were asswag'd, the land grown drie;
Laid by those fears which did his soul annoy,
And sacrific'd to God the Lord for joy:
So in their souls did these rejoyce, when they
Beheld their *Guide* before them on the way.
For now they knew that God their work did blesse,
And crown the action with desir'd successe.
Without enquirie or more noyse they went
Into the place to which the *Star* did point.
And there they found the *Virgin* ever blest,
Suckling the tender Infant at her brest;
And singing with contentment full and high,
A *Psalm* of *Davids* for a *Lullaby*.
Which seen the *Magi* prostrate on the ground
Ador'd the *Infant King*, in whom they found

More ſignes of glory flaming from his eyes,
Then all the *Stars* portended from the skies.
No ſooner was this done, but ſtrait they finde
An holier ſpirit working on their minde;
Which quickly made a paſſage to their tongue,
And found a vent in this harmonious Song.

1.

AS is the Breath of morning Flowers
Perfum'd with early ſhowers,
Of *Violets* in their prime,
Or *Roſes* pluck'd betime.
Bruiſed *Spices*, or the blooming *Thyme*,
Such, but more ſweetneſſe ſhall perfume
The words which from thy lips doth come.

2.

More beautie haſt thou in thy Face
Then Babes of mortall race.
More brightneſſe in thine eyes
Then in the ſtarrie skies,
Or morning Sun when it doth riſe.
And yet ſo terrible withall,
That thy proud Foes before thee fall.

3.

All other Princes at thy feet
With fear and reverence meet,
Shall throw themſelves before
Thy footſtool; and adore.
Thy throne ſhall ſtand for evermore.
And thou ſhalt reign from Weſt to Eaſt
As long as Sun and Moon do laſt.

4.

The kings of *Tarshish* and the *Isles*
To thee shall bring their spoils.
A Crown thy head shall hold
Of given *Arabia* gold.
And in thy dayes it shall be told,
That hils and mountains do bring peace,
And righteousnesse doth still increase.

They ended; and as coming from a trance
Stood mute awhile, admiring at the chance
Which had befaln. Then making their addresse
Unto the *Virgin*, they to her expresse
Both who they were, and why they came so far;
Of the first light they borrowed from the *Star*;
Which hapned in *Jerusalem*, and all
That in the Court of *Herod* did befall.
The *Virgin* hearkned unto the Relation,
Whether with greater joy, or admiration,
Is hard to tell. And having heard the whole,
Suppresst her speech, and prais'd God in her soul
For all those prodigies of goodnesse shown
To her dear Son, now publish'd for his own,
To *Jews* and *Gentiles*, publish'd in the sight
Of *men* and *Angels*, and the *stars* of light.
Mean times the pious *Magi* busied are
In powring out their treasures, to prepare
A Present for the Infant-King, when they
As *Tributaries* purpos'd to obey.

Which having fitted, on their bended knee
Humbly adoring ſo great majeſtie,
Each to his ſacred hands his gifts preſents
Each one the ſame Gold, Mirrhe, and Frankincenſe;
The *Frankincenſe* as to a *God* they gave
Who was the Incenſe of their prayers to have.
*Gold* they gave to him as a *King*; and *Mirrhe*
As *Man*, to fit him for his Sepulcher.
A preſent ſtrangely mingled; and which ſhewed
With how divine a Soul they were endued.
And now the *Magi* having ſeen and done
What they deſir'd, prepar'd for going home:
Firſt giving an account of what they found
To *Herod*, as by word and promiſe bound.
When lo, as firſt they cloſ'd their ſlumbring eyes,
When ſtrange and incoherent *Phantaſies*
'Gin to invade the brain; and circling round
The Brows, with new *Chimeras* do abound: (mand
A voice from Heaven was heard, which gave com-
"That they directly travell to the Land (Court
"From whence they came; that to the Tyrants
"They ſhould not go, nor ſcatter the report
"Touching the place in which the Infant lay,
"When *Herod* practis'd how to make away. (came,
Rowz'd with this voice, and wondring whence it
They compar'd notes, and found it no vain dream;
But that th'eternall *Providence* had given
This admonition from the Court of Heaven,
For the preſerving of the *Babe*, whoſe life
They had betray'd elſe to the Tyrants knife:

So shak'd they off their sleep; nor longer stai'd
These devout *Pilgrims*. And such hast they made
T' avoid surprizall, that before 'twas day
They found themselves wel onwards on their way,
And in good time came home in safety. Tell
What they did there who can. And so farewell
Ye *first fruits of the Gentiles*, the foundation
Of CHRIST reveal'd and preach'd among the Nations.
And now the *Virgin-mothers* time was come
To *purifie* her selfe, *present* her Son;
Or offer, in exchange to God above
*Two Pigeons*, or a *Paire of Turtle Doves*.
This Rite the Law required; she yeelds consent;
And to *Hierusalem* with joy they went;
A City of great wealth, of beauties more.
And though she never had been there before,
Yet gaz'd she not upon the Cities face
But to the *Temple* bend her speedy pace.
Which when twas first objected to her eye
It seem'd so full of grace and Majestie,
That she not knowing how the work to prize,
Opened her heart to God, and shut her eyes.
A stately Fabrick did no Age afford,
But all too mean (thought she) for such a Lord.
The stones so smoothly hewed, so evenly laid,
As shewd the Mason had out-done his trade;
Of large dimensions, and advanc'd so high,
That the proud *Turrets* seem'd to touch the skie;
But all with *Gold* so over-laid, that none
Was able to affirm 'twas built of *Stone*.

The

The *Galleries* which compass'd it about
With all advantages of cost set out,
Were to the sight most glorious to behold
Studded with *Silver*, and emboss't with *Gold*,
Enchas'd with *precious stones*, which every where
Did through the Gold, as through a veil appear.
Yet a discerning eye was troubled most
To see the workmanship exceed the cost.
Vpon this holy ground no Vulgar feet
Did use to tread. The *Priests* and *People* meet
For divine *Offices* in severall *Courts*,
Which girt it round: and unto these resorts
The *Virgin-Mother*, with a strong desire
To do what *MOSES* and the Law require.
It chanc'd that as she was at her *oblation*,
Attending on her *First-bornes* Presentation;
*SIMEON* came by, (who hath not *Simeon* known)
A righteous man, and of a faire renown;
One that fear'd God, in him confided most,
And was fullfilled with the *Holy-Ghost*.
To this just man it had revealed been
That dye he should not, till his eyes had seen
*CHRIST* in the flesh, the Lords anointed Son.
And now by Gods direction was he come
Into the *Temple*; where, he passing by
Did on the *Babe* cast a regardfull eye.
Whom when he saw so full of heavenly grace,
Such beams of glorie lightning in his face:
He took him in his armes, and blest the *Lord*
Who to old *Simeon* had perform'd his word.

And

And lifting up to Heaven both hands and eyes,
He ſung his *NUNC DIMITTIS* in this wiſe.

1.

LOrd let thy Servant now depart
In peace, according to thy Word.
For I have ſeen how good thou art;
And the ſalvation of the Lord,
Is to my ſenſes made ſo plain
That I both ſee and feel the ſame.

2.

This ſaving health prepar'd hath He
Before all Nations, in their ſight;
That to the *Gentiles* it might be
A Lantern, a conducting light.
A glorie which doth all excell
Unto his people *Iſrael*.

Here ending, he let fall again his eye,
And ſeeing both the parents ſtanding by,
He bleſt them both; And to the *Mother* ſaid,
"That her young Babe, that *Infant*, ſhould be made
"A *ſtumbling block* to many, but to more
"A cauſe of riſing higher then before:
"That he ſhould be reviled and defamed,
"His perſon ſlighted, and his doctrine blamed;
"The ſenſe whereof ſhould more afflict her heart,
"Then if pierc'd thorow with a ſword or dart.
"But bid her be of courage, and be ſure
"His *fame* and *faith* for ever ſhould endure.

No

No sooner was the good old *Simeon* gone,
But *ANNA* the old Propheteſſe comes on.
A woman old to miracle, of life
Religious and devout; ſeven yeers a Wife
For fourſcore yeers and foure ſhe had remain'd
In ſtate of Widowhood, and leave obtain'd
Within thoſe *Courts* to make her fixt abode,
Where night and day ſhe ſerv'd the *Lord* her God.
She coming in, and noting what was done,
Prais'd God the *Lord*, and ſpake to every one
Who from their God Redemption did expect,
That this was *CHRIST*, th'*Anointed*, Gods elect.
*Joſeph* and *Mary* much admir'd to hear
And ſee the wonders which had hapned there,
Concerning the young Babe; but *Mary* moſt (loſt:
With whom, no word which had been ſpoke, was
All was layd up, and treaſur'd in her heart,
But now the time call'd on them to depart.
And having done all which the Law required,
They return'd back to *Bethlem*. There they hired
An houſe for preſent uſe; and meant to ſtay
Till both the Babe grew ſtronger, and the way
More fit for travell. But no habitation
Could *Bethlem* give them long. A *Revelation*
Came from the Lord which haſtned them away
To a far Countrey; where without delay
My *Muſe* would bring them, and together go;
Had ſhe not other work in hand to do.

## The Prayer.

*ALmighty God, which by the leading of a* Star, *didſt manifeſt thine onely begotten Son to the* Gentiles; *mercifully grant that we which know thee now by faith, may after this life have the fruition of thy glorious Godhead. And to this end grant moſt gracious God, that as the ſame thy onely begotten Son was in the ſubſtance of our fleſh* preſented *to thee in the* Temple; *ſo we may be* preſented *to thee in pure and clear minds by* JESUS CHRIST *thy Son our moſt bleſſed Saviour. Amen.*

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## CANTO VII.

*Old* Belzebub *doth* Herod *tempt*
*To make away the* Innocent.
Joſeph *by God fore-warn'd, exil'd*
*Himſelf in* Ægypt *with the Child.*
*Th'*Innocents *ſlaughter'd;* Herods *death,*
*They return back to* Nazareth.

DOwn in the deeps of Nights eternall ſhade
There is a dungeon full of horrour made
For thoſe unhappy ſouls, who from Vertue fall,
And wilfully their looſe affections thrall
To wicked and unlawfull luſts. No light
Shines in this Vault; 'tis everlaſting Night,
Unleſſe perhaps ſome twilight glimpſe appear
From *Lakes of fire and brimſtone* flaming there.
No *voices* heard, but the complaint and crie
Of ſuch as alway dying never dye.

No

No *Muſick*, but the *tune of Lamentation*,
Gnaſhing of Teeth, howling and execration.
No *Company*, but of tormenting *Fiends*
As black and horrid as the place, whoſe end
Is without end, and all the mean time ſpent
In ſuffering or infliƈting puniſhment.
Into this deep, this bottomleſſe *Abyſſe*
This Hell of darkneſſe and continuall miſts
This *Houſe of torments*, *LVCIFER* and all
His evill *Angels* from the Heavens did fall.
There do they dwell for ever, and from thence
Send out their ſpies to bring *Intelligence*
The devill will not fall alone; his aime
Is to involve all mankinde in the ſame
Deſtruƈtion with him; and he ſped ſo well
That all the ſtock of man in *Adam* fell.
But fearing leſt poor mortalls might recover
Their loſt integritie; his *Spirits* hover
About them night and day, and fill their mind
With ſtrong Temptations, luſts of every kinde.
In all *Aſſemblies*, in all parts they be,
No place eſcapes, the *Temple* is not free.
And as they looſe or gain, ſwift word they bring
Of all ſucceſſe to their infernall King.
So did it chance that ſome of this damn'd crew
Who up and down about the *Temple* flew,
Took notes of every thing was ſaid or done,
In the preſenting of poor *Maries* Son.
And poſting with the news to *Satans* Court,
Came at the time, as others made report

Of

Of the *Wiſemen*, and the great noyſe they made,
The fears of *Herod*, the ſucceſſe they had;
And of all points a full accompt they gave
Even unto that which hapned in the *Cave*.
Who having done; the others leave beſought
To tell what newes they from the *Temple* brought.
At this the furious Tyrant thrice did ſhake
His black and horrid Curles, each haire a ſnake.
Fire ſparkled in his flaming eyes, a ſmoake
Out of his helliſh mouth and noſtrils broke.
And roar'd ſo loud that all the *Fiends* did fear
The dreadfull day of doome was drawing neer.
"Tis ſo (ſaid he) I ſee my reigne is done
"Vnleſſe we uſe ſome quick prevention.
"This Brat of whom you ſpeake is doubtleſſe He;
"The great *Meſſiah*, who by heavens decree
"Shall cruſh this Kingdome; Tis the *Promiſed ſeed*
"Deſign'd to break this never-conquer'd Head.
"But are decrees of heaven ſo fixt for ever
"As to admit no changes? can they never
"Be fruſtrate or reverſ'd? in all our traine
"Is there no Fiend of more then common brain?
None that can finde a way to ſave this Crown,
To croſſe heavens pleaſure, and confirme our own?
Here ſtop't old *Belzebub*, and ſtar'd about
Expecting which of all this diligent rout
Could give beſt Counſell. At laſt up ſtarts he
Who in times long before was ſent to be
An *Evill ſpirit in the heart of Saul*;
A ſpitefull and malicious *Feind*, in all

The Pack was none more bloody, nor which knew
More waies, mens hands in murders to embrue.
" Said he, Great Prince let me have leave to go
" To *Herods* Palace, I'le poſſeſſe him ſo,
" That without long delay, he ſhall deſtroy
" This hated Brat, this ſo much dreaded Boy.
" T'was *David* then whoſe blood *Saul* ſought to ſpill,
" And *Herod* now ſhall *Davids* Iſſue kill.
The offer pleas'd, and he had leave to trie
His utmoſt powers. The Devill poſt doth flie
To *Herods* Palace, whom he finds aſleep
Buried in Wine. No carefull thoughts did keepe
His eyes from ſlumber, nor his minde from reſt.
He had forgot what fears his troubled breaſt
Had entertain'd, when late he heard the newes
That a young King was born unto the *Jews*.
The *Magi* came not back, and that he took
For a ſtrong evidence that thoſe men oth' Book
Had heen miſtaken in their Art; " the *Stars*
" Being too cunning for *Aſtrologers*:
And finding now their errour for pure ſhame
Declin'd the Court, and went the way they came.
Flatering himſelf with theſe imaginations,
His fears are laid aſide, his recreations
Reſum'd again, and all contentments flow
Which a laxacious Court could give or ſhow.
In this eſtate the ſpirit found him, laid
Vpon his Beds of eaſe, and thus he ſaid.
" Dull, drowzie, man, is this a time for ſleepe,
" For wine and pleaſures, what weak man would keepe

No

"No better watch upon himſelf, and hear
"A *Rivall* to his ſcepter lives ſo neer.
"Think not becauſe it is a *Child* pretends
"To thy Dominions, that he hath no friends,
"None that will raiſe a partie, and prepare
"In times of doubtfull peace for certain war?
"Art thou the man that thorow ſo much blood
"Haſt waded to the Throne, that haſt withſtood
"All darts of envy; and to gaine the place
"Haſt rooted out the *Maccabean* race.
"Could not thy Prince *Hyrcanus* ſcape thy hand
"By whoſe meer grace and goodneſſe, thou didſt
"The ſhock of the proud *Sanhedrin*. Art thou (ſtand
"The man that mad'ſt compaſſionate nature bow
"To thy ſecurity; and for point of *State*
"Haſt excerciſ'd thy jealouſies and hate
"On thine ambitious ſons; it cannot be
"*Herod* ſhould ſleep thus, or that thou art he.
"Awake dull ſoul, and with all ſpeed prevent
"Thy certain ruine. Wiſe men nere repent
"Or loſt advantages. Vſe all thy ſpeed,
"The blow fall's ſhort which fail's to do the deed.
"Loſt art thou, if thou long this *Rivall* brooke;
"Thy Fate ſtands thus, ſtrike now, or elſe be ſtrook.
This ſaid he breath'd into his furious breſt
His ancient fears and jealouſies, unreſt
Of minde, impatience of delay, debate,
Thirſt of revenge, blind rage, and mortall hate.
And having thus poſſeſt the *Tyrants* heart,
Leaves him unto himſelf to act his part.

*Herod*

*Herod* awakes, and thinking on the Vision,
Thanks his good *Genius* for the admonition.
Condemnes his former coldnesse, and admires
How he became so dull in his Affairs.
He now could call to mind that prudent fear
The *Magi* put him in, when they were there.
Nor thinks that they return'd not back for shame,
But worse affected to him then they came;
Part of the plot perhaps. And then he rages
To be thus fool'd by these pretended *Sages*.
Yet to his comfort he could call to minde
The time when first that dreadfull *Comet* shin'd,
Which did declare the young Childs birth. By that
He had the better hopes to speed the Brat;
And yet not make his vengeance strike too far,
Beyond the time pretended by the *Star*.
That he would free himself from this distraction,
He was resolv'd; and now he is for action.
So up he riseth, and gives strict command
For an whole troop of spears to be at hand
For such affairs, as he should them direct;
And signes a Warrant unto this effect:
"That they should make strict search in every house
"Of *Bethlem* and the Villages there-abouts;
"And without fear or pitie cut in sunder
"Every male childe of two yeers old and under.
Which done, the *Tyrant* having eas'd his brest
Of his main fears, settleth again to rest.
Mean while th'Almighty from above the skie
Upon the Earth bends down his gracious eye.

And sees the cruell Souldiers ready bent
To execute their cruell Lords intent.
Which seen, he calls the *Angel* to come neer
Who once before to *Joseph* did appear;
Gave him his charge, and bid him haste away:
It was a businesse would brook no delay.
With so great speed doth the good *Angel* flie,
That lesse then in the twinkling of an eye
He stood by *Josephs* bed; who void of fear
"(We oft fear least when danger is most neer)
Had layd him down to sleep. No carefull thought
Perplext his minde, or any tumult wrought
Upon his wearied sense. The *Angel* broke
That calme awhile. and thus to him he spoke.
"*Joseph*, thou son of *David*, hail, the Lord
"Of heaven & earth, to whose commanding word
"Thou didst so cheerfully submit, when I
"Brought my last Message to thee from on high:
"Bids thee arise; and take thy reputed Son,
"Thy *Virgin-wife*; and all together run
"With as much speed, as thy weak limbs will bear
"Unto the land of *Egypt*; and stay there
"Till God commands thee back. For *Joseph* know
"Here is no longer tarrying for thee now.
"The cruell Tyrant *Herod* seeks the life
"Of the young Babe; Prevent the Butchers knife.
"To *Egypt*, *Joseph*; make no longer stay
"'Tis Gods command, and see that thou obey.
*Joseph* awakened, doth to *Mary* go
And in a great distraction lets her know

What

What was commanded by the Lord, whose will
He for his part was ready to fulfil.
No doubt was to be made of hers. And so
That very night they towards *Aegypt* go;
Taking such private wayes as seem'd them best,
That without danger they might safely rest
Their wearied limbs. Such place they hardly found
Till they set foot upon *Egyptian* ground.
To which with more desire and haste they fled
Then *Israel* made when thence delivered.
Strange alteration, see how *Jacobs* Seed
Haste to the Jail from whence they had been freed.
A tedious journey for a tender Child
In that sharp time. And yet the *Infant* smil'd
As if he scorn'd the danger, and would teach
His Parents to contemne the *Tyrants* reach.
Yet if sometimes he did impatient grow,
Or would not sleep, when they would have it so,
Or cryed (as Children will take leave to crie)
The *Virgin* still'd him with this Lullaby.

I.

BE still my Babe, and take thy rest,
Afflict not thus thy Mothers brest.
Secure art thou from *Tyrant* fell,
And from the dreadfull powers of Hell.
Then do not crie;
No Foe is nigh,
And God looks on thee from on high.
By. By. By. Lullaby.

Draw thou thy hands from my breſt,
Whiles I on thy fair eyes do feaſt.
Drop not a teare,
No harm is neere.
And heres *God with us*, if it were.
By a By. By. Lullaby.
Thus did ſhe ſtill the Babe, when as they went
All kinde of creatures ſtudied to content:
The ſturdie *Oake* ſeem'd capable of ſence
When he paſt by, and with due reverence
Bow'd down his aged head. *Dead trees* begun
Being reviv'd thus by a warmer Sun
To iſſue out freſh bloſſoms, and were ſeen
In this decay of Winter to look green.
The wanton *Birds* in a full *Quire* did ſing
As if they purpoſ'd to prevent the Spring.
*Beaſts* fierce by nature at his ſight grew tame,
And bowed low as then right well became.
Th' outragious Bullocks as if taught and broke,
Offering their gentle necks unto the yoke.
With theſe contents the *Wilderneſſe* they paſt,
And into *Egypt* ſafely came at laſt.
Into which land no ſooner was he come
But the *Idols* fell, the *Oracles* grew dumb.
As *Dagon*, when the *Ark* was priſoner took,
And in his *Temple* plac'd for terrour ſtrook
And tumbling down broke both his hands & feet,
Plainly confeſſing that he was unmeet
To reſt ſo neer the *Arke* of God the Lord:
So fell the *Idols* of their own accord

2.

How haps it that ſuch things be done
As ill beſeem thy Fathers Son.
That one ſo old ſhould be ſo young,
And that the *Word* ſhould want a *tongue.*
That th'*Head* comes down,
The *feet* to crown;
And *Heaven* makes *Earth* of like renown.
By a By. By. Lullaby.

3.

Thoſe *Feet* that the whole Earth can meaſure,
How come they to be tyed together!
Art thou in *bonds*, or canſt thou be,
And yet give hopes to make Man *free?*
Canſt thou thus groan,
Yet eaſe our moan?
Give life to us, yet looſe thine own!
By a By. By. Lullaby.

4.

Thoſe *Hands* which graſpe the World ſo great,
Why do they tugg thus at the Teat!
Why doeſt thou uſe that *Voice* to cric,
Which can like Thunder ſhake the skie?
Thoſe *Eyes* divine,
If thus thou whine,
Can they at once both rain and ſhine!
By a By. By. *Lullaby.*

5.

Oh then lye ſtill my Babie ſweet,
Thou on my *knees*, I at thy *Feet.*

Draw

Throughout all *Egypt* soon as he came there;
That *Arke* indeed whom all the Devils fear.
Scarce had they fix't in *Egypt*, and possest
A secure dwelling a fit place of rest;
When *Fame* came flying after, and brought word
Of the poor Infants slaine by *Herods* sword.
Which news whereof being posted to the Court
Of Fame, loud Fame did publish in this sort.
The Souldiers long accustomed to fulfill
With cruell diligence the *Tyrants* will.
Rush into every house at once, that no
Prevention might be used t'avoid the blowe
Now readie to be given; and from the brest
Snatch the poor *Infants* to eternall rest. (bones;
Some did they squeeze to death, or break their
The braines of others dasht against the stones:
Some tost upon their spears, or thrown at length
To trie whose arme carried the greatest strength.
So great the slaughter was in all that Coast
As died the Rivers red; each field almost
With streams of gore bloud running down amaine
And th' inrag'd mothers of the *Infants* slaine
Ran madding up and down the streets with cries,
And excreations peircing to the skies.
As was the crie and howling in the land
Of *Egypt*, when the Angels killing hand
In every house the heire or *First-born* smote
From the Kings Palace to the Shepherd's Cote:
Such was the noyse in *Ramah*; such the griefe
Of *Rachel* mourning, (but without reliefe)

For

For her loſt children whoſe unhappy Fate
Fame did thus weepe, or weeping thus relate.
Which news thus told, the *Virgin* entertaind
With ſad lamentents, and to juſt heaven complain'd
Againſt the Tyrant. Yet did this mischance
Sweeten her joy for the diliverance
Of her dear Babe: for well ſhe knew that He
Was onely aim'd at in this Teagedie.
So proſtrate on the ground the Lord ſhe praiſed,
Who had ſo mighty a Salvation raiſed
To *Davids* ſeed: and then did riſe, and ſing
This *Pſalm* of *David* to the heavenly King.

1.

IF God on our ſide had not been
A ſtrength and ſtay,
Had he not in our Cauſe been ſeen
May *Iſrael* ſay
Taking part with us in the day,
When wicked men againſt us roſe.
Then had they ſwallowed us alive,
So furiouſly their rage did drive
Such burning hate poſſeſt our Foes.

2.

Then doubtleſſe had the waters drownd
Us every one;
Our ſouls had in the ſtream been found
Quite ſunk and gone
The ſwelling waves there worſt had done

And

And over whelm'd our luckleſſe ſoule.
But God the Lord be praiſ'd alway
Who hath not given us for a prey
But from their teeth preſerv'd us whole.

3.

Our ſou'es from out their bloodie hands
Eſcaped are,
Even as the bird out of the bands
Of hidden ſnare,
Which cunning Fowlers do prepare.
The ſnare is broke and we are freed.
For all our help is in his name,
Who firſt the heaven and earth did frame;
And thus hath ſav'd us in our need.

So ſung the *Virgin mother*. And this *Pſalm*
She oft repeated in that bleſſed calme
Which God had given her, when ſo fierce a ſtorm
Threatned her deareſt hopes t' have over born.
It ſeem'd the land of *Goſhen* where they were;
T'was all ſo calme; no hail nor thunder there.
*Egypt* the place in which the *Arke* did reſt
With cruell ſtormes and ſeas of bloud diſtreſt:
Which, once the *houſe of bondage*, was now made
Their Caſtle of defence; And there they ſtaid
Vntill the Tyrants fatall threed was ſpun.
When *out of Egypt God reveal'd* his Son.
"Nor was it long. Swift vengeance overtakes
The murderous man. *Herod* not more haſt makes

And

To shed the blood of *Innocents*, then God
To scourge him with a sharp tormenting Rod;
An *Ulcer* eats his Bowels, and a Fire
Consumes his Entrails; so that no desire
Of his worst Enemie could have wish'd or dealt
A greater torment to him, then he felt.
And with these pangs, the wretch so cruel-hearted,
Was torn in pieces, rather then departed.
Scarce was the news made known to vulgar ears
When lo, the *Angel of the Lord* appears
Once more to *Joseph* in a dream, and said,
"*Joseph* awake: the Lord on thee hath laid
"This new command. Return with thy small train
"Into the land of *Israel* again.
"Thou and thy dear Babie, and thy *Virgin-wife*;
"For they are dead that sought the *Infants* life.
*Joseph* awakned, tels the Lords command
Unto his *Virgin-wife*, who out of hand
Takes up the Babe; and as the Lord requir'd,
They hasten to the Land so much desir'd.
Ah blessed Babe, how art thou tost about
From place to place, transported in and out;
And yet canst finde no rest. For when they came
Into *Judea*, where the certain fame
Of *Herods* death had fill'd all places; there
They met this sad news, that his Son and Heir
Call'd *Archelaus* (the old Tyrant dead)
Possest the throne, and reigned in his stead.
Here *Joseph* made an halt, and did not know
Whether he should return, or forwards go.

Fearing leſt *Archelaus* might inherit,
Together with the Crown, his Fathers Spirit.
But God reſolv'd this doubt; and in his ſleep
Warn'd him to quit *Judea*, and to keep
The way which leads to *Galilee*, and there
Abide in ſafety without further fear.
Never heard *Joſeph* a command from Heaven
To which obedience was more gladly given.
He muſters his ſmall troop, and forward goes
Secure from danger, in contempt of Foes,
To *Nazareth*, his old dwelling; whither come
Their ancient Friends to bid them welcome home.
And there they dwelt with comfort and delight:
The Babe from thence being call'd a *NAZARITE*.

And ſtay thou here my *Muſe*; preſume no more
Upon ſo high a Subject. Do not ſore
Beyond thy pitch; nor caſt a wandring eye
On the great Powers of his *Divinitie*,
Expreſt by miracles, and mighty ſignes,
Doctrines more holy, Precepts more divine
Then thoſe of *Moſes* and the *Law*. Theſe things
Carry too vaſt an height for thy weak wings.
Reſt thou then here, and dare not to reherſe,
Such heavenly matters in ſuch homely verſe.
The *Promiſed Seed*, Gods and the Virgins Son
Hath lived his firſt yeer; And thy task is done.

## The Prayer.

*ALmighty God, whoſe praiſe the young* Innocents *thy* Witneſſes *have confeſſed and ſhewed forth, not in* ſpeaking, *but in* dying; *mortifie and kill all Vices in us, that in our converſation our life may expreſſe that Faith which with our tongues we do confeſſe. And ſince O Lord thou haſt ordained and conſtituted the ſervice of all* Angels and Men *in ſuch a wonderfull order; mercifully grant that they which alwayes do thee ſervice in Heaven, may by thy appointment ſuccour and defend us on Earth, through* JESUS CHRIST *our Lord. Amen.*

All power and glory be
To him that ſits upon the throne,
Th'Almighty One.
And for the Lambe
Who the great Dragon overcame,
For ever bleſt be He.

*FINIS.*